

# FRAKCIJA 16

performing arts magazine

## 90s

directors  
playwriting  
dance  
space  
performance art  
out of institutions  
alternatives  
cultural strategy  
festivals & venues  
action/frakcija

## arguments for future

# FRAKCJA

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The issue in your hands completes *Frakcija's* first five year plan. Performatives, body and technology, theatre of memory, iconoclastic theatre, modern primitivism, Russian actionism, sexuality, body/difference, utopia/dystopia, Eastern Europe, institutions, the alternative, cultural policy, festivals, Artaud, Brecht, Barba, Borsari... these are some of the topics our magazine focused on over the past five years. More important than the topics, however, are the artists which have had an impact on the Croatian scene during these five years making the existence of a magazine like *Frakcija* a necessity, and the interaction of these artists and our authors. This is why we can now offer, as we do in this issue, a survey of the new Croatian theatre and dance scene, which was not the case in mid nineties when we were starting the magazine. Even though most of the artists worked within the confines of official production, the critical response was lacking and they were considered a foreign body in this context, which for some became a life-long predicament. Today no one can ignore the power of this completely heterogeneous, demanding and expanding scene, seeking its relevance in a context broader than Croatia. The scene consists not only of directors, choreographers and performers, but also includes the whole network of artists and institutions somehow affected by and affiliated with them.

It is only logical that *Frakcija* should celebrate its fifth year by presenting the context which brought it about and in which it developed, all the more so as the magazine itself faces new challenges of getting rid of the academic halo, engaging more dynamically with the problems and topics presented by the contemporary production of and thinking about the performing arts, and internationalising its audience through bi-lingual issues. Which is by means a farewell to the Croatian scene. From now on, we shall discuss it in a broader context.

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**directors**

**90s**

# how to kill a ruler

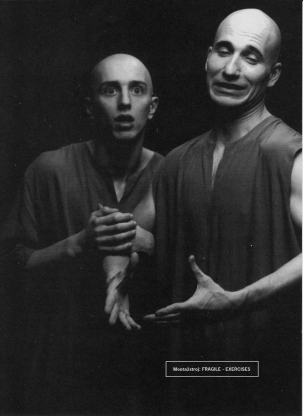
Written by  
maria blazevic

Directly or indirectly, the party in power in the Croatian theatre of the nineties has, unfortunately, been in the service of the then ruling political party, or, at the very least, harnessed within the common ideological horizon. The ruling theatre party for the most part wasted its efforts, occasionally with the self-absorbing laughter caused by the dull satire darts, on insidious cover-ups exploring the criminal actions of the Tudman decade, the doings of the regime which successfully turned patriotism into chauvinism, transformed Croatia's defensive war into an aggressive war in Bosnia, slandered the victims by legitimising the executioners, and reorganised a democratic state into a mafia plan. Certain prominent members of the ruling theatre party adorned such political transformations in the capacity of directors of accompanying non-theatrical representational forms: the accompanying rallies of the ruling nationalist movement, the menacing military parades, the adulatory victory celebrations in the Croatian National Theatre, and in the inevitable end, the funeral.

The members of the theatre majority – flexible, ideologist, inclined to the political practice which, beneath the mask of a newly democratic and recently reformed bourgeois society, raised the stability and sovereignty of the state community on the near absolute iconographical or off-the-record authority of the Father of the Nation, adherence to the party line and the associated national interests – and the theatre have in the nineties mostly tested and learned – pseudo-classic-realist, or – or take a few hybrid designations – dramatic theatre as the winning aesthetic combination, which could, especially in its orthodox form, reflect the wished for image of the world and of Croatia – if not on the thematic level then, certainly on the level of hierarchy and its constitutive

subject's prerogatives. Within this ideological framework, a theatre performance was given the minor task of executing the tempered signifying instructions of the author, revealed from the pulp of the dramatic text: the staging is conceived as a materialisation of the author's worldview, in which a temporary interruption of relations must as a rule be resolved, if only provisionally, but with the relations themselves remaining intact in the process; the spectator can feel the "shiver of katharsis" of the bourgeois-national type, but not the awakening of the critical awareness. Theatre was, therefore, cast in the role of the sublime conductor of spiritual transition, the restorer of the unquestioned values of national or international literary heritage, which would then feedback healing the wounds of the battered national being, curing its provinciality complex and raising it against foreign adversaries. In order to at least stage such return into the imaginary spiritual homeland, the majority theatre party had to further reinforce the "system of the theological theatre," already privileged under the previous social and political regime. This scheme is hierarchically ordered in such a way that it isolates and controls the actor/performer, the present enunciatory subject of the dramatic discourse and the corporeally realitive of its stage performance, through whom the virus of uncertainty and contingency is injected into the previously determined structure/plan; in short, the most dangerous virus is hidden beneath the mask of a fictional character, a being of the order based on the fact that in the beginning was the word of the Author, Maker, Father, Ruler, Chief of the dramatic text, the crystal clarity of which must in the end be muddled in the murky depths of the speaking body. To render it as weak as possible is the task of the dramatic theatre, the basic feature of which is predictability, which

The term "theatrical stage" marked a specific phase in the development of performing arts in Eastern Europe in the last thirty and fifty years. Croatian dramaturge Vlado Blažević defined the "system of the theatrical theatre": "The theatre as the complex location of the dramatic text as its hierarchical nucleus, stage, scene, director, lighting, sound, music, etc. designed by virtue of its aesthetic" (and a hermeneutic, knowledge practice, in: Škapljarić, 1999 Introduction to the Hermeneutics of Croatian Theatre, in: *Art, Space, and the Body*).



Mentalnot: FRAGILE - EXERCISES



Domen Balačić: KRALJEVO

in turn makes us feel we rule the world. Or at least Croatia, its small scale model.

Fortunately, the story of the Croatian theatre of the nineties does not end here. I would like to believe it only starts here.

The ever more active new theatre fraction should not be imagined as a minority but homogeneous group of theatre artists, critics and theorists gathered around a common programme but more like a "minority forum,"<sup>14</sup> a group of individuals ready to combat - aesthetically but sometimes also politically - the ideological offensive of the theatre in which dramatic text - a variant of natural language, the allegedly primal and "most powerful communication system" at the disposal of the "human collective" (Lotman) - functions as a central medium for revealing truths: truths which, it has to be conceded, need theatrical interpretation, but which nevertheless remain unquestionable truths.

It is precisely because of this, it seems, that the new Croatian theatre of the nineties questions the role of and often tries to dispense with the dramatic text as a privileged toolbar of a possible fictional world of the performance and its signifying tendencies; the latent political control mechanism, which, helped by the director's interpretative metatext, looms large over the total "performance text" (de Manolis, Elm, etc.) in order to ensure, in fact impose,

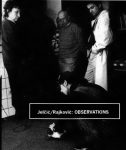
the presence of the writer's word/voice in theatre communication. Stagings freed of the (single text's) commanding sway supply their energies from the "real," "natural," i.e. "zero world,"<sup>15</sup> which they take as their template, from the empirical reality inhabited, among other things, by various discursive forms, including literary texts, which the performance, intentionally or otherwise, engages intertextually with. Such intertextual exchange is radically different from, and potentially more liberating than, the "staleish" (as Derrida would put it) relationship in which the staging/performance is only granted the right to a re/constructive rejoinder. In theory, the new Croatian theatre of the nineties actually exerts an aesthetic and therewith an ideological turn towards the "post-dramatic" (Lehmann), post-logocentric, even post-textual theatre, insofar as some stagings manifest an explicit desire to intensely affect the spectator - following the course of the performance entrained by "direct experiences" (Wierl) - by non-discursive means. In principle, this theatre explodes, destroys, and inevitably only redefines the "theological schema" in order to loosen its ideological grip: it dissipates and redeploys the function of the author/logos of the staging/performance according to all constitutive subjects of theatre performance, from actor/performer to spectator; or ironically undercuts the

<sup>14</sup> Where a "minority, an individual, can assume the majority and its power, as well as power in general" (Ulrich Mäthgen: *Gezeiten der zeitlichen Theaters*, 1972).

<sup>15</sup> "... as an organized and personally structured postmodern group, making up the prime text... of nearly post-modern discourse, its 'theater' and constitutive surroundings... (Every possible dimension is lifted in the background of emptying space of the private world which surrounds it)" David Marie: "Your new theatre is both postmodern," in: *Theatre/Theater* 41 (1993), 104-107 (re: designations, Paris, 1994).



Borna Balotić: 2 LICENSE



Jelica Rajković: DESERATIONS

author's demiurgical pretensions, exposing the natural language and its spoken usage to the aggression of paralingual or non-verbal sign systems, the performer's body most often being given the main subversive role. Playful in the gap between its palpable-material presence and the irremovable absence due to the always already culturally, socially, ideologically, but also aesthetically encoded stagings/performance it engages or gets involved in, the body incites the trembling semiotic moving of performance signs freed from the need to - at least until they reach the scope of the spectator's signifying and conceptual activity - and in a preconceived, already in/one/scribed meaning. At the same time, it tests the feasibility of its counter-textual longings against different contexts, personal as well as cultural, ceaselessly historicising and writing it.

These doubts were already, however seldom and always by means of metatheatrical commentary or procedures inscribed in the dramatic text itself, brought to consciousness and foregrounded by the majority/ruling theatre, in the final analysis, the satirical pranks and a more liberal interpretative atmosphere notwithstanding, always inclined to succumb to complacent answers and the rules of the dramatic, logocentric, "theological theatre," the generator, narrator and promoter of the illusion of a stable reality and of an incontestable social order. How

is it possible to expose the dominant ideological discourse by merely replicating its authorial/ironic systems, the critical change of which, though (re)presented on the thematic and narrative level, inevitably dissolves under the pressure of a petrified hierarchical structure, in which the prerogatives of the constitutive subjects are already firmly established? The only thing the more democratic members of the majority theatre party can concede is a redistribution of power with the aim of striking a balance between the primary (writer) and secondary (director) author, but only if their common position of superiority with respect to the performer/actor, reduced to the role of carrying out the orders of higher instances, is not jeopardised.

Doating the comfort of the conclusion and the finitude of the repressive order, the new Croatian theatre opts for direct or indirect political criticism, refusing not only the seign of one but of each and every party and speaking only for its "undetermined opposition" (Melchinger). A theatre operating from such positions is constantly creating tensions and resists every system bent on inevitability and longevity, presenting it with its possible/imminent decay or, at best, restructuring. This is why that theatre has in the nineties in Croatia been subjected to ignoring, related finances, indirectly banned, kept in marginal institutions or left to its own devices outside the institutions.<sup>2</sup> Should we survey all representative stagings

<sup>2</sup> The new Croatian theatre did not come out of the void in the nineties. On the contrary, it was conceived in the late eighties and performed cautiously over the two decades facing no granted future. It thus found its aesthetic outlet only in the late eighties with the establishing of the New Theatre Festival Ljubljana, and a theoretical place in conversations with the Performing Arts Magazine *Tranzit*.



Ivica Buljan: PILAD

Ivica Buljan: FEDRA

of the new Croatian theatre of the nineties and essay a description as if it were a single, continuous subversive and alternative theatre piece, created in the context of proliferating, by no means harmless, products of the majority theatre party, we would come up with its distinguishing, even innovative, features placed within five different but interrelated and mutually dependent perspectives:

## 1. the critical attitude

The fragility and transformability of (personal, sexual, gender, national, religious) identity is being discussed/defended, or a descent attempted into the abyss of the body where elemental forces - of attraction and rejection, love and hatred, desire for an impassioned merging with the other (body) and/or for its passionate destruction - spring from and collide (Montažnoj's *Fragile* and *Everybody Goes to Disco* from Moscow to San Francisco, or, in a different representational and semantic code, Ivica Buljan's *Feshat*). The apocalyptic side of everyday life becomes, somewhat paradoxically, a form of subversive political attitude (*Observations*, *Slowing-down*, *Uncertain Story* by Bobo Jelić and Nataša Rajković). The utopian project of decontaminating the community by the beneficial effects is realised at least in the theatre by means of the apparently spontaneous (at first sight amateurish) performance within a performance (Rene Medvedek's

*Beckett*). Contrariwise, the dramaturgical structures of the performance itself expose the - classic, logocentric, (Croatian) national, so-called Western - theatre as an institutionalised, testing site and an effective means of repression (Goran Sergej Pristal's *Confessions*). The scary side of revolution Ivica Buljan's *Pilad* and war (D.B. Indić's *War Kitchen*) is exposed. A radical and implacable deconstruction of the patchwork national myths, discourses and levildoings of infatigable myth-makers and manipulators (Branko Brezovec's *Baccharius* and *Caesar*) culminates in a shocking, symbolic and ambiguous action at the heart of Brezovec's *Marathon*: three marathon runners, a farmer, a craftsman and a clerk, three "small men" condemned to the Beckettian finish-the-start, unfurl and then carry into the grave the Croatian flag, with black instead of red and blue stripes and black instead of red chequers. Branko Brezovec has daringly revealed the most nauseating dilemma of the schizophrenic Croatia's newfangled national state: where is the fine line that separates being a victim from becoming an executioner and when is it overstepped?

## 2. different working methods

The relevant the purpose of which is merely to complete the performance as a "material reflection" (Artaud) of the literary text, or the director's imposed metatext, is replaced by a creative process of gathering original - or, more





Tasker EDIT: IMAGE

precisely: more original - narrative and representational material, in which the performer becomes ever more prominent. The performer is an individual who through her own story, attitude or style, gesture or word, gradually fits into temporary structures, always open to (de)reconstruction, not only during the process of creating a piece to be performed, but to some extent - greater certainly than in the dramatic theatre - while performing in front of the spectators as well. Even though most of the representative works of the new Croatian theatre of the nineties are results of long periods of improvisation, and some can even be considered open representational structures (especially *Observations* and *Slowing-down*), it should be emphasised that improvisation is used in varying degree and for many different ends by various authors. Borut Šepanović's *Mostaštroj* characteristically develops the materials of a "single" work over a period of time: the material gathered during several years is always selected and shuffled anew for different outings of the "same" work. Sergej Prištaj selects and further develops certain sections of the generative work:

*Man, Chair* thus originates out of *Confessions*. The process of creating a theatre piece can even, at least initially, have a primarily socio-dramatic and psycho-dramatic purpose, like Ivica Buljan's indeed *Concrete*. Branko Brezovec merged two works created in disparate social, religious and cultural contexts, in Norway and in the Albanian community in Macedonia respectively, into a third: *Three Noras Await Basil*.

### 3. new dramaturgy

The prerogatives of dramaturgy (and hence of theory) expand to include the whole process of creation and the totality of the moving sign systems and performance strategies employed; the structure of these works therefore becomes much more complex than the one offered by the traditional dramatic theatre. Of the procedures of "new dramaturgy", the most often used are: juxtaposing various performance forms and styles, deconstructive montage, intertextual and intermedia dialogue and conflict (especially in Brezovec's work), laying bare the representational act/intention by metatheatrical means, multiplying representational planes (*Confessions*, *Uncertain Story*, Borna Baletić's *2 Legends*), metanarrative manipulation of story space and time, fragmented narration and cut-up plot lines simultaneously presented (*Uncertain Story*, most of Brezovec's work, particularly *So, So*, self-referential statements of the performers, but indirectly of the directors and dramaturgs as well (*Confessions*, *Uncertain Story*).

### 4. deconstruction of the relationship between and the identities of the character and the actor

Through careful preparation and the process of creating a work and by means of numerous devices of "new dramaturgy", the space is cleared for representing and playfully engaging with the Third One, the constant flow



Frank Gehry: B&B



Branka Brozović: **CAESAR**

of being between and around the two seemingly opposed, incommensurable identities. The space is cleared for the performer her/himself, however polymorphous and ungraspable: the performer/actor/character, surrounded by spectators, is a vulnerable but passionate player, goaded on, but also ready to invest into and thus expand upon the process of creating and performing a work, ready to question and re-define her/his own (pseudo)autobiographical experiences, certain only of the permanent uncertainty of the questions that interest us with respect to her/him - "who says - I?" and "what will the body do?" Although most of these works count on performing the "personal" in a significant degree, *Observations* and *Slowing-down* by Jakić and Rajković deserve to be singled out. The complex procedures of creating the character, as opposed to identifying with it, graft the real or imaginary fragments of the performer's personal stories (situations, relationships, moments, events, phrases...) onto the fictional structure of the performance. These fragments are then left lingering until the actor, in the moment of a renewed identification with their evocative and narrative content, activates them in the performance itself, exposing them to the risk of potential - always partial, but always different - restructuring and contingent meandering. Performers/actors/characters of the two Jakić/Rajković works have created a fantastic

theatre being which constantly interferes in the referential sphere, frustrating the closure of serious/fictionalisation of the staged goings on. In contrast to Kirby, who in the treatise on "Acting and Non-acting" concludes that the "actor is visible in the character", what is intended here is to make the character visible in the actor. Therefore, the only name the character can bear is that of the actor/performer her/himself.

On the other hand, certain works insist on the multi-coded, actually total acting/performing, where the actors/performers are forced into constant re-interpretation so as to avoid the closure of the sign/utterance in any acting code or performing form (cf. Confessions), in order to resist the subjection of their real or imaginary performed features to an ideological system, to prevent casting their bodies in various social and political roles. Branka Brozović's *Caesar* is by far the most complex example of this, because the performers are laid bare not only linguistically but physically "intracorpally" (Bharucha) as well. They are marked by remnants of traditional national acting codes, estranging-enchanting, successively or simultaneously, and combine at least four different modes of representing and dismantling characters: ironically demonstrating and citing the actions and attitudes of the characters (primarily the Slovenes), identifying temporarily with the fixities of their possible fictional



subconsciousness (the Croats), abandoning themselves to the waves of unleashed performing passion, the energy of the body overflowing the representational borders, risking (or at least seeming to risk) chaos (the Macedonians, mostly); sometimes, on the contrary, the work of the raw performance material is shown, the product of a feigned representational recklessness, *dilettantum* almost. Such apparently unrestrained yet polyphonically structured play of signifying constantly expands and furrows the referential field of representation, hiding the tracks of personal and national identity of the performer/character (or providing false ones), causing incessant explosions of signifying nuclei within a hypertrophied intertextual and inter-performative organism of the staging/performance, and preventing its complete submission to a coherent, *possible* and completed interpretative system/text.

## 5. questioning the representational roles and performance strategies of speech and body

The verbal system of most works is exempt from the law of idealised, which is tantamount to idealised, stage speech with its calculated intonation and clear diction, aimed at euphony and transparent conveying of information, the crucial signifying activity being shifted from the monolithic (poetic) word to the fluid and completely individualised systems of paralinguistic signs. The variants are many: alternative invented languages, the private language of each performer, the language which resembles

coded but inarticulate sounds produced by the child learning a natural language (Medvešek's *Beckett*); the intonational choreography of the rhetorically pregnant phrases, visualised and even materialised through coagulation and chiselling of sounds (Beljan's *Pilati*); embodying speech/sound in Caesar, where sound releases words from the shackles of arbitrary meaning, turning them into vibrating bodies, roaring machines, breathing beings – soaked in the sound features of national languages, these words thrown, like the real, palpable bodies of the performers, into the flow of representation, burn out and sometimes produce unbearable noise almost completely obscuring the score, yet instantly revealing its own rhetoric: willy-nilly we are thrown into the metonymic minefield of the Balkan melting pot.

The performer's body resists the dictate of the word, ceasing to be merely its escort and support, a moving decor of verbal behaviour, and becomes involved intentionally or spontaneously in the processes of incessant attracting and rejecting, charging and releasing, re-deployment but also dissipation and loss of significance. The performing body acts as a heated generator of instability of the illusion of reality, and of the theatre as well, and hence of the social/political/aesthetic order which would feel be represented and established (in the theatre, later also as sufficient and incontestable). The theatre of Nataša Lužetić (Magaš), Vili Matula (Marčausen) and Željko Vukmirića (MP Singlet) is still easily graspable in terms of referentiality, while Ivica



Rene Medvešek: **BACKET**

Bujan's *Piled* creates an abstract or symbolic, musical over, slowed down and almost lyrical, cart movement style. In *Backett*, Rene Medvešek explores and combines relationships between bodies extended through objects, bodies threatened by objects or rescued by objects; bodies as parts of objects, objects turning bodies into objects and bodies turning objects into bodies. In the painful moments of Borut Štazarovič's work *Fragile*, bodies long to hide behind the mask of however fictive identities, but the wounding looks of the spectators easily inscribe them in their own ideological system, succeeding in ruthlessly crushing their desire. The fragility of the body caught in the grindstone of the dramatic, verbal, representational text understood as a grid of significances interpellated by cultural, social, political, national, gender codes is simultaneously a proof of its weakness and the source of its power. The text rules the body, but the body feedbacks undermining the stability of that rule, yielding at the moment of its apparent triumph to another text, even "writing" its own plurisignificant text, or giving itself over to the flow of desires, becoming a site of intersection of energetic currents flowing through it without ever

freezing into a fixed meaning and representation. The body is not enough for the performers in *Caesar*. Only momentarily disciplined, referential or abstractly choreographed, it is always heated: its limbs are disordered and disjointed, its movements debauched, as if it would shed its bloated, sweat-drenched, burning skin, bursting apart under the pressure of the swollen grotesque corporeality. The bodies in *Caesar* are hypertheatrical, polymorphous bonfires scattered over the whole representational landscape, dispelling the mimetic-realistic fog, or destroying the harmony of enchanting, dreamy images of the visual theatre. As soon as the representational performative discipline brings the bodies to the heel of the intentionally stylised sign, they cut loose, escaping the taming intentions of the directorial or spectatorial (meta)discourse by means of momentary, explosive and (seemingly) spontaneous reactions, in the liberated space, on the brink of chaotic kinetics and deafening cacophony, aggressive and deformed bodies swirl and voices of the performers clash, creating an energetic whirlpool sucking the enthralled spectators-fellow players into a pot for "melting fire and live flesh"



Goran Segan (Pristal): CONFESSIONS

(Artaud). The only way out is, paradoxically, to dare to look into the light of the "reflector of the critical reason" (Brecht).

Mostly dressed in dramaturgical and representational metaphors, the aesthetic and ideological, but occasionally even openly radical socio-political (especially in the work of Branka Brozović) polemic of the new Croatian theatre with the compromising aesthetic, ideological and political values of the majority party in the (not only) Croatian theatre and the social context it was reflecting and creating, provided some of its participants to challenge also the basic conventions and alleged oppositions (such as fictionality, truth-life, presence-absence) in the structure of theatre representation by means of complex interpretation of staging/performance and theory, emphasising the ambiguity of sharp distinctions and questioning the ontological incontestability of the allegedly opposed entities, theatre and the world, performer/actor and character, sign and referent, body and text (as a grid of significances). Segan/Prisla's *Confessions* offer only provisional conclusions, or rather new starting points for further discussions. This metatheatrical and in its every segment self-referential work makes the very theatrical medium confront its own institutionalised repressive nature at the same time linking it loosely to the kindred performatively-representational forms, primarily performance art, video and various genres of body/movement theatre, dance and mime. Such polymorphous representational context is made to accommodate one of the most radical and consistent anti-logocentric performances in the Croatian theatre, Ganiir Bartol Inđić's *Man/Choir*. The inserted

performance gradually became the frame and the cohesive force of the performance-essay on the theatre but also of the performance-critique of the national, resolutely logocentric theatre tradition, especially of its modern prefabricated vestiges. Together with the spectators, Inđić was finally given the answer: in the beginning (of the theatre) was not the word but the cohesitive body. But it is surrounded by witnesses and their words trying to de/pre/scribe it. The dual nature of the body cannot be completely tamed by any text (whether literary, historical, verbal or non-verbal), but the dual nature of the text cannot likewise be replaced by any body. The text is the means of trapping the subject in an ideological code, but it is also the site of its creative freedom within its own codes; manipulating knowledge, it also guards knowledge. The text is the law that would control the body, but it is at the same time always already a code the body incessantly eludes. It can even be reduced to a mere thing the body can cut and paste as it pleases. The text would vain stop the movement of the body. The body would vain break the rigidity of the text. The text is a place where identity is lost but also gained, a dark glass in which the subject can catch a glimpse of her/himself, and the body briefly escape the dangers of real/material presence, thus preserving a part of itself from decay and death. Was not the performer's body, desperate with such knowledge, enraged and crazed, forced to use the words "I'm killing the ruler within me!" to announce its release? (Translated by Tomislav Brlek)

*Mario Matković is a theatre critic and member of the editorial board of Fraška.*



playwriting

# 90s the locus of dissociated self: death in contemporary croatian plays

written by  
netaka govedic

01

And from this period of death, one reform: the greatest benefit: the desire to remain as close as possible to her, death, our most powerful mother, the one who gives us the most violent push of desire to cross over, to leap, since one cannot *stay close* to her, she demands and makes desire; and this desire is split, it is simultaneously its own opposite, the desire to approach her close enough to die from it, almost, and to hold oneself extremely far back from her, against her, right up against her, our most dangerous and generous mother, the one who gives us [...] the staggering wish to come out...

Hélène Cixous, 1991: 37

With its visceral excesses, its gargoyles of blood and sensuality, the Gnostic offers a perfect compensation for the *dead* historical inclinations of the postmodernism.

Russell A. Potter, 1992: 4

Discussing death and Gnostic postmodernism within the framework of the theater immediately evokes Thanatos' counterpart: the *liveness* of the theater performance. If Irena Sajo, our most important interdisciplinarian in this paper, is understood as the playwright obsessed with the action of the Grim Reaper (and in all five of her plays), death attentively 'watches over' the dramatic characters; death relocates them in time and space and it is again death that the privileged perspective of otherworldliness is offered to the audience). Sajo is equally concerned with the theater as a 'live media' (cf. Elam, 1997 (2560): 30) or the theater as all-encompassing, synthetic art form which nevertheless includes and overpowers all other 'overmediated' contemporary performances (Bogdanov, 1994: vii). Every discussion about the theater appears to be informed by the central contemporary 'performative myth', i.e. the corporeal living presence of the theater performance contrasted with the 'deadly-representational

forms' (dispositive forms engaged in second-hand or mediated representations), and to Death itself. Death is one of the most beloved gods of postmodernism anyway: Beckett's 'posthumous discourses' go nicely with Barthes' 'dead authors'. As moreover, according to Brian Moore (1994 (1987): 227-232), turns out to be the fundamental topic of all fiction which we call postmodernist. But death has never really left the literary stage, the only person somehow detained in the postmodern era is the Holy He and His celestial presence.

This Beckett-like insistence on the character's/actor's speech and bodily presence on the bare stage is perhaps at its most intense in Sajo's latest play, called *The Fly Like Green Walls* (2003). The duel between the antagonistic pair of Gulliver Javor and The Shooter takes place without props from the archive of 'realistic' motivation, such as plot or narrative 'development' - the two characters fight under monumentally unvarying conditions, since Gulliver Javor fights with his mental integrity and words, while The Shooter uses the whole spectrum of physical torture and restrictions. In her deeply religious exorcism, anchored not only from the Christian tradition but also from Gnostic and Artzard, Sajo in fact stages the bodily demise of Gulliver Javor, endowing it with heroic undertones of 'victimisation', 'sacrifice' and 'upright victory'. The drama of dying ('departure') brings us to the medieval tradition of contemplative monks, that means with the 'heavenly retreats' for mental suffering. What really suffers under such work resulting in the reprobation of the living body, it is considered as 'less worthy' than the 'internal' spirit. But the paradoxical modernity of the theatre can only affirm the body: performance practices the here and now of the living performer, not the spiritual legacy of the beings lost. On another level, the battle between Gulliver Javor's Holy words and his own living body, the battle between Literature and Theater or between two representational systems, seems to be staged within Sajo's leading character as well. In the end, the theater





"ACROSTIC MIRROR" written by Anna Sajo

loses the performer's body and the play stops: no redeeming (literary) words are heard, there is no "afterlife". In this respect, it is the performer's body that Sajo comprehends as ultimately sacred. The paradox of the play develops even further: *The Rib Like Green Walls* is not a secular play (I would understand it as a metaphysical poem), but its "staged body" is secular and mortal - Gulliver dies. The strongest "reality effect", however, in this play is not produced by death (as the "ultimate power that ends the game"). Death is so constant, common, inevitable, palpable, close and crucial that no one bothers to question it: the air itself is lethal. What is painfully "real" or breathtakingly vigorous is hence Gulliver Junior's **free and fragile** body and his **identity performance**. He refuses to eat, he refuses all physical comforts in prison, and he chooses corporeal decay to prove that his will power is stronger than The Shooter's gunpower. Here identity is provided and sanctioned by death, steeped in the Western tradition of attaining "singularity" in death throes. As Jonathan Dollimore eloquently claims (1998), death is the enduring essence of all existing self-negating and self-losing identities: death is the major Western ontological difference because its lure promises escape and dissections from the "poor" human finitude into divine legend. Loving your own death means loving your own legend; it is the potential divinisation that makes death wish glamorous. However, this mechanism is usually "confounded by the anxiety of actual death" (Dollimore, 1998: 20). As we have already said, veneration of death is not reserved exclusively for ancient Christian philosophers. Death plays a central role in the works of contemporary thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas, and I find that the words of Jean-Luc Nancy (1993: 12) express most clearly this "wild" mythology of death:

"No more than it can die - no more than it can > seriously < die, if we can say that with straight face - can the subject be born, or can it sleep. Immortal, ungendered, and insomniac: this is the triple negation over which the life of spirit rises, imperiturbably adult and awake."

One could say that Sajo's Gulliver talks directly to Death: The Shooter is only Death's (theatrical) mask. Perhaps The Shooter in fact represents the devil Lord himself while Gulliver Junior is his good rejected son. Junior could be understood as Lucifer, but reinterpreted as son ("Junior") who justly rebels against the violent Senior God (this is the classic Gnostic approach and an equivalent of the mythical story about the relationship between Zeus and Kronos). As Sajo occasionally calls The Shooter "our Father" and talks about a multitude of his "gun-happy" children, Gulliver's rebellion aims against The Whole Violent World Order as well. It is very important to notice that Gulliver's words match his deeds: he is not "just another" impotent and logocentric poet in prison; he is the **action of refusal** and the **body of disobedience**. Above everything else, through Gulliver's rejection of The Shooter as his Father, Gulliver also rejects the "patriarchy" or fatherly order. Sajo is explicit in saying that Gulliver is glad not to produce the gun-serving sons of his own. It turns out that Junior is tormented because he refuses to act like a soldier; a terrible disobedience in a system endlessly at war. He says: "I am ready to be anything, anything but a conqueror...". Gulliver is **disassociated** from The Shooter's order, but he is **disassociated** just as painfully from his own female lover. She waits for him and he hears her voice throughout the play. In all her plays, Sajo innovatively uses stage directions as the autonomous narrative voice, shaped in the Greek choric tradition, but not addressing the potential director with anything like "technical

instructions'. This choric voice is usually the most intimate and lyrical; it communicates directly with the audience for the reader), but characters in the play can hear it as well. In the play *The Rib Like Green Molls* Sajko offers two **male bodies** and an echo of the bodiless and nameless **female voice**. What we learn about the invisible and passive female figure is that "standing endlessly by the window, she gradually turned into a wall". Love will not redeem these lovers; there is no promise of eternal salvation. Love lasts, and it is mutual, but to feel it means to suffer the impossibility of its realization. Since The Shooter is the one who finally makes the decision about life and death and who separates the lovers, he is symbolically endowed by the playwright with the greatest responsibility and power in the play. Sajko also insists on "unsexualised" love between Gulliver and The Woman. Perhaps Jill Dolan (2000 [1997]: 63) offered the explanation for the whole range of the phenomenon of desexualisation in contemporary drama: "But sexuality, in Western culture, is as rigidly constructed and prescribed as gender." Since sexuality is "compulsory", it also belongs to The Shooter's realm. Therefore, Sajko points out, it must be renounced. There is another explanation for the programmatic division of body and spirit: it is – again – a Platonic restaging for 'disembodiment', dissociation, i.e. death. The forbidden word of the so-called Western regime is, of course, pleasure. Even Roland Barthes, the philosopher of desire, finds pleasure only in the text, not in the body. Even Sajko's plays reflect the most conservative principle of patriarchal mimesis, where to kill or condemn desire (and desire is historically attributed to the female "disorderly" and therefore "dangerous" universe) means to control the mind. The critique of this attitude persists in the medium of the theater itself, where body cannot be "impure" or "corrupted": body in the theater equates words. This is also the reason why I cannot perceive Sajko's plays as "literature" – rather more like **written theater** with

Shakespeare's "performance scripts" in mind).

## 02

Another Croatian playwright, Boris Senker (b. 1947), twenty-eight years Sajko's senior and usually considered a political satirist with a penchant for postmodern pastiche and parody was known in the eighties for "collectively" authoring plays with Tahir Majkić and Nino Štrabe. In the course of the nineties he began writing plays on his own, in the tradition of the postmodern – meta-historical – tragedy. Associated with Sajko in his preoccupation with the liminal states of *theatrum mortis*, Senker completes the dramatic cycle called "the decapitation trilogy"<sup>2</sup>, where he examines the deaths of Nietzsche and Oscar Wilde (Dandy: A Midlaughting Night's Dream, 1998), the Biblical heroine Judith (Victorious Judith, 1995) and the Elizabethan rebel Lord Essex (Gloriana, 2000). Death is staged very differently in each play, but it remains the focus of the playwright's attention. Dandy resembles Plato's Symposium in the sense that the divine figures of philosophers and poets (Nietzsche and Wilde) and here even the gods themselves (Apollo and Dionysus), attend the luxuriant, cosmic, out-of-this-world drinking party. Its style has the sardonic flavor of Aristophanes' Clouds and the dark pessimism of the late Euripides. The rival gods Apollo is called "Your Excellency" and Dionysus "Your Highness" reflect the typical Nietzschean and modernist tradition of splitting 'madness/Dionysus/theater/body' (on the one side) and 'order/Apollo/literature/text' (on the other), but they also reflect the split between the antagonistically positioned and repeatedly contrasted notions of power and beauty. The resolution of the play, built as a double dispute between two philosophers and two gods, ends with the gods deciding against allowing humans to have both beauty and power, art and political/social influence at the same time. They kill the aspiring artists with the same gesture of boredom, exhaustion and disgust for

<sup>2</sup> These plays have not been published yet; I refer to the manuscripts, given to me by the author.

"BAMBI BABY", written by Elizabeth Sengler



themselves. Divine existence is presented as an eternal tedium, occasionally brightened by a visit of some interesting human creature. A short and dense version of Wilde's play *Salomé* is performed inside Senker's play as another kind of pastime for the deities (and for scholars who enjoy endless meta-theatrical links). However, the whole play reads Nietzsche as the true prophet in the sense of the Wilden and Christian Johansen. But this prophet announces the power of the dead god and the glory of the humans, not the power of sacrificed/dead Christ. At the same time, Senker's *Salomé* is a cleverly androgynous Oscar Wilde. The play of narrative mirrors never stops, since we, the audience, know that Nietzsche (in Senker's play called *The Voice*; probably with an ironic nod to Biblical proportions) and Wilde did in fact merge their respective strengths – in our reading or watching of the play. In this respect, not even Gods or Death are more powerful than human art. The visual dimension of the play is worth mentioning: the semantic pairs of crystals (in the form of drinking glasses as well as metaphorical evocations) and blood (in the form of wine and decapitated heads) constantly paint the scene with a disturbing, deadly beauty. From Wilde, Senker also borrowed the traditionally feminine figure of the ever-present and ever-changing Moon.

Victorious Judith is an extremely interesting play about a heroine who remains peaceful and loving even in the midst of war eagles. Very much like Sakyo's heroes, this character longs for the escape of death. One might read the play as Judith's self-sacrifice, performed in order to finally reunite with her dead lover, but she would not have to choose to kill Holofernes in order to achieve this goal. Judith is therefore not a classic self-sacrificial drama.

Senker's stylistic device of introducing war as a macabre but hilarious comedy in verse, with Judith speaking in solemn, serious and intimate prose, produces the receptive shock of eerie and fruitful discrepancy – very much like the Porter scene in *Macbeth* or *The Gravedigger* scene

in *Hamlet*. Now, this really is a war: theatrical **inequality of representation** with **real deaths** included. The use of stage directions has a mockingly military and independent voice of its own, since it imperatively 'orders' the actors what to do and how to act. The problematic part is the playwright's insistence on Judith's archaic and all too obedient profile – she listens and obeys the words of God, she values the love for her dead lover Manóde above anything else, she dies dressed as a whore because she lets the soldiers instruct her on how to seduce the tyrant. Her emotional visions are powerful (like is a true artist; but not a philosopher), and her actions are heroic, yet her mode of behavior is yielding to paternalistic instructions, from both above and below. In this play, Woman equals Wisdom of the Heart (and in no play of Senker's can one find a woman who has both brains and heart). Glotana, the most misogynist and most political play of the trilogy, claims coldness and manipulative theatricality for the historical Queen Elizabeth, and falseness and lethal ambition for her contemporary 'double' and stage protagonist, The Actress. The poignancy of the play lies in the Queen's monologue about the **theatre of the dead**, where we are 'played by other people', who are 'not as forgiving to us as we are toward ourselves'. Senker subtitled this play 'Elizabeth and Essex or Theater and Sex', but desire is unmasked as just another political and/or emotional forgery. In Senker's plays, death is staged only to be defeated, over and over again, by another kind of **desire**, located in the **aesthetic expression** – the eros of art. But the battle with Thanatos is constant and exasperating. Violent dramas of repeated decapitation are a case in point.

## 03

The thematic coupling of death and desire undergoes even harsher dissociation in Sakyo's play *Orange in the Clouds* (1996). Although this is her first play, it addresses



"THE CHILDREN OF OUR PRIEST", written by Mate Matilić

numerous issues that will be elaborated in her later works. One might say that *Orange in the Clouds*, in being an "afterlife" kind of play, stands in complementary relationship with *The Rib Like Green Walls*, framed as the "last hours of life" kind of play. Both plays insist on personal integrity realized in this world and both treat afterlife as a zone of disturbing powerlessness. And yet, only death offers the "true" perspective on lived experience. We could also compare it with Sakić's *Victorious Judith*, in a sense that *Orange in the Clouds* desecralizes female heroic sacrifice (in the name of love) and reveals it to be just a noble illusion. Furthermore, Sakić firmly states that the purpose of female existence should not and must not be just erotic love. In time-honored Socratic fashion, Sakić equates Death with the Truth (revelation). She in fact shows many conceptual similarities with another Croatian playwright, Mate Matilić: both of them tell their metaphysical stories with death as the narrative starting point; both are attracted to the metaphor of global flood; both use characters who are often neither dead nor alive; both are obsessed with their characters' individual and ethical responsibility.

The difference lies in Matilić's preference for the grotesque, while Sakić usually chooses the lyrical. In Matilić's last play, called *The Children of Our Priest* (1999), Death will "mark" the "sinful" priest's body with mortal sickness, brain cancer in the shape of a violin, because the Priest facilitates the abortion of female

vocalist's child (he sets her free from forced detention). Death will execute Matilić's priest because he has helped in the execution of two children: his lover's child, in the days of his youth, and now the female player's child. But Matilić is not a traditional Christian writer; more often than not he exposes the dark hypocrisy of the Church. He unmarks the ways the Church or religion are used to blackmail us with the notion of Last Judgment and death itself. In his early plays, especially *Cinco* and *Marinko*, characters take "death" into their own hands. *Cinco* and *Marinko* are manual workers who play with death by pretending to be dead in order to escape the cruel political and economic order. And they succeed, but at the high price of being cut from their homes and families. They end up being displaced without the possibility of return: the hardship of manual work is over, their Croatian family are safe with pension funds they have earned while working in Germany, but, alas, everybody considers them dead. They are thoroughly and infinitely cut off from public existence.

Back to Sakić's dissociations, *Orange in the Clouds* deals with the female character, Štita, who arrives Up There (Purgatorio, Heaven, Hell; we do not know for certain believing that her dead lover Oscar has been "calling" her from Beyond, but when Štita finally meets him again, it turns out that Oscar has forgotten her a long time ago. There were never any messages from the Other World, she made them up. Huge metaphysical misunderstanding



"SHAKS BIRD" - Interview by Kristian Shapiro



continues: Shilla wants to go back to Earth, but she is not allowed to do so, because her physical death is final and she has already "spent" her human incarnation. After a nervous breakdown, apparently possible even in the Clouds, Shilla chooses to go back to Earth in the form of a canary bird, where the caged life completely wipes out her mental strength and enthusiasm. The central rhetorical strategy of the play is Shilla's irrational, "inappropriate" and wild craving for oranges; a remnant of the human yearning for joy and fulfillment. She "dies" only when the yearning stops. The audience therefore learns that emotions were the locus of Shilla's self. Heavily stereotypical gender-wise (with Shilla constantly flirting with male Angels and justifying her own existence only through the erotic relationship with her dead partner!), this play is also the opposite of the cold masculinist insistence on sheer intellect and will power, portrayed in the play *The Rib* like Green Walls. Joy has a prominent place in this play, but it is again acknowledged as something out of human reach - "angelic" self over and over suffocates our 'corporeal' identity. The most interesting thing is to see how Sajo travels from the early *Orange* to the later play *The Rib*, eventually choosing for her authorial voice the Hegelian **male** discourse, where death is spirit and spirit is death. In Hegel's own words (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 1967: 126): "... death is both the extreme limit of finitude and... the dissolution of limitation. Death is the moment of spirit.

Outside the obvious sharp gender and genre divisions stands Sajo's play *4 Dry Feet* (1999). Two characters, the Tenor and the Baritone, are a strange, childish and tender duo that plays together while the catastrophe of global flood unfolds around them. Most of the time they sound like singing insane nursery rhymes sang by Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* - their "infantilisation" is at once scary and macabre. As the Sajo's choric commentary in the play goes: "And maybe the game isn't even funny.

Maybe it's like childhood - a prologue to the moment of its own disappearance."

The characters are mentally and emotionally dissociated from the world, but here the world itself keeps reminding them about the inevitability of "bonding" with the total deluge around them. The world quite literally suffocates them up with a soft 'gulp'. Sajo pays homage to Eliot's (1963 [1936]: 92) famous verses: *This is the way the world ends/ This is the way the world ends/ This is the way the world ends/ Not with the bang but a whimper. Not even the children, evoked in Tenor's dreams, are saved. Let us hear the children's down-song translated by Tomislav Brlek:*

#### **children's choir**

A terrible shower caught us on the run,  
we sink in the mire, we step through the snow.  
We have no strength to reach the heights,  
there ain't no hills enough for us to go.  
No mountain road leads there,  
our feet are wet, we stand in the sea.  
The end is near, so they're saying,  
of being saved no hope have we.  
In a few hours, that's all we've got,  
rain will drown the whole lot.

#### **tenor**

Don't lose breath! Learn to dive!  
Don't jump off the raft! You must strive!

#### **children's choir**

Cold mine tide covers the field,  
there's nothing left down below.  
It lasted too long, we're dissolving,  
the sky's blue but the sea's yellow.  
The time is ripe for holding hands,  
we'll take upon us all the blame.  
We're not guilty of those deeds,  
but there's no land for us to claim.  
The more we fear, the louder we sing,



CHAIKIN, illustrated by Boris Becker

no hope anyone could bring.

#### loser

Take everything off! You'll be lighter!  
Don't be foolish! Who's a fighter?

#### children's choir

If fish can swim in the dark,  
maybe the kids can do it too.  
The first shout sends us off,  
into the darkness, me and you.  
We won't feel we're suffocating,  
we'll dream we're roller-skating.  
In a few hours, that's all we've got,  
rain will drown the whole lot.

Why does water take over the world in this play? Is it the Biblical punishment, an apocalyptic vision, an ironic description of human futility, a symmetrical reflection of the humans' inner chaos? In any case, here the matter dissolves again and two bodies float to their death. The water in the picture is not clean lacrima benedicta, but the dirty mud that pollutes the world. The hell Sajo describes is not lit with fire, but soaked with water. Once again, the play is written against the body, against materia and against any hope. Poetic verses are not strong enough to help the characters survive; poetry is just beautiful, visionary desperation. The intensity of Sajo's pessimism and the last resort of poetry in the face of death reminds us of Bernard-Marie Koltès, Samuel Beckett, Thomas Stearns Eliot. Sajo is also indebted to the existentialist poetics, especially to Sartre's plays. For instance, in Sartre's play *No Exit*, the infernal afterlife proves to be the exact replica of the hellish life before death; there is no boundary between evil life and evil death (in this respect Sartre knows no death at all; only endless existence in the realms of guilty conscience). In my opinion, the attitude about the absolute 'malevolence' and wasteland nature of reality, present in both Sajo and Eliot, has its roots in their self-negation. In both dramatic poets, self-negation

reaches global, positively mythical proportions. These authors mourn the lost God and the lost ideal by measuring themselves and the rest of the world by the lack of 'perfect' standards and by their fear of **death's other side**: productivity, creativity, origination, endeavor. **PERFORMANCE.** Every writer and every artists knows intimately this fear of performance, but only few make it the ruling fascination of their oeuvre.

Sajo made it the subject of her play *Reconstructions: Comical Funeral of the First Sentence* (1997/98). In this cruel and funny play the main character, the writer, is called The Man Without Words (or 'man bereft of words'), and his 'love' is simply called The Whore. One is strongly reminded of the expressionist tradition of European theater; especially the plays by Arthur Schnitzler. The Whore in Sajo's drama uses and manipulates the Writer to death in order to become a free and famous widow, and he gives in because he is unable to find 'the right sentence'. Only after his funeral does he realize what a mistake it was to give up the search and he finally manages to pronounce his desired First Sentence – but he does so in the afterlife. This comically all-important sentence is deliberately absurd, since now it is uselessly self-addressed. It goes like this: Bury me in the many flowerbeds of the universe, for I am marble without a name, immobile in words, I am mute. ... With this words the play closes. We might say that the Writer at last does defeat his fear of live artistic performance, but the victory comes too late. What is symbolically significant in *Reconstructions* is again the playwright's misogynist portrayal of women. On total as 'whore' and her sympathetic identification with the male character. It seems that 'art' for Sajo translates as a 'male domain' and the subject who represents art is without exception cast in the male gender. Lucie Irigary (1985 [1974]: 133) described this phenomenon with perspicuity:

'We can assume that any theory of the subject has always been appropriated by the «masculine». When she submits



to Gough of theory, woman fails to realize that she is renouncing the specificity of her own relationship to imaginary."

This subject that feels "appropriate" only in the male gender is also inevitably connected with guilt: like Gough in the Clouds, Reconstructions can be interpreted as a play about a resonant mistake; morality play written in the language of ironic exaggeration. The theme of **dissociation** (physical and metaphysical) continues: Winter is first emotionally dissociated both from the Whore and from his writing, then he becomes dissociated from his earthly existence and at the same time desperately aware of it. In this regard, Sajo writes subversive feminine dramaturgy of disoriented selves where not even death becomes a force of integration; there is nothing linear or final about it. Death as **mutability** further dissociates the self.

## 04

The self, theatrically initiated and dissociated in death, describes yet another Croatian play, *The Consolation of North Seas* (1992) by Stokodac Šnajder. In this intertextually complicated version of Goethe's *Faust*, with Ariel instead of Mephistopheles and the Otherworld of Death packed with theater actors, Šnajder tells the old Serbian legend about two friends who loved each other so much that they agreed to be each other's wedding guests no matter what. One of them dies, but still comes to the wedding, as promised. After the ceremony, the dead friend takes the living one for a short visit to his place in *The Beyond*. While seconds pass *Up There*, here on Earth years and years fly by. On his return to the world of the living, the freshly wed husband and soon-to-be father finds out that all his family is either very old or dead. Many

decades have passed. His son is now a grandfather and he dies from a stroke when meeting his long-gone father. And so the faithful friend finally dies himself, of grief. Šnajder's hero Vagant is really a prototype of a "displaced person" - both in the military terminology and in the sense of losing one's intimate place in the world. In this paradoxical play, where Vagant does not really believe in death, because he lives in the constant company of miracles, angels and Ariels, and where his friend's love protects him only to a certain degree, violent death still proves to be unavoidable, very real and scary. Like some medieval knight with visions in his eyes, like another displaced figure, the archetypal Don Quixote, Vagant is not ready for the spacier reality. Death comes as a punishment for Vagant's inability to respond to violence appropriately (with violence); very similar to Sajo's play *The Rio Like Green Walls*.

In the play *White* (1997), written by the young playwright Dubravka Mihačević, it is again the intense and tender male friendship we are looking at, once again threatened by the prospect of near death. Since one of the protagonists is seriously ill, the dramatic game we might name 'death will choose one of us' seems to reflect the terrible anxiety of the war and postwar years in Croatia. It does not lead to new spirituality, but to the analysis of absolute dreadfulness of the afterlife. As Šnajder and Sajo point out, 'life is death' is life without emotions, without tastes, without joys, without colors. It is a green-pard, grim and gray pard where we are still, painfully, alive.

## 05

The Christian background of sin and punishment, employed in many of her earlier plays, is completely abandoned in



the Sajo's latest short play *Archetype: Medea* (2000), where we get to the bottom of playwright's uneasiness with female role as such. Medea says: *It's hard for me to speak as a woman/ I could be a woman like people are schizophrenics,/ hiding the uterus in the clenched fist of a big man. And later on: A woman I am not. What is woman? A position of support and obedience*, says Sajo. No wonder this Medea establishes her identity with violence; she just repeats the violence that she has experienced as a woman she does not want to be. Sajo never for a moment conceptualizes womanhood as something other than slavery. All her plays are **protect plays**, but 'the system' is seen as thoroughly deadly: in the Sartrean sense, there is no way out. What can be contrasted to this attitude, for example, is Helene Cixous' view (1991: 41): *One can emerge from death, I believe, only with an irrepressible burst of laughter. Laughter interrupts not only the 'long history of genocide' but also the deadly monumentality of the masculine over-lasting inscription of death. The (dramatic) conflict with the male world starts when the woman laughs at the warrior's bravado posture, not when she "prays" for his next sale conquest or when she feels "compassion" for his important Historical Tasks. Joy, thought Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, best disturbs the oppressive order. Boris Senker proved it with his Nietzschean play *Danilo*, and with all his dramatic faith in the power of aesthetic passion and laughter. Paradoxically, it was the male playwright whose female heroines transcended the seriousness of the Croatian death order or the Croatian male order of war cruelties and humiliations. We may compare it to Vera Mantero's famous performance called *One Mysterious Thing*, dedicated to Josephine Baker, where Mantero, as a solo performer, steps out of the circle of humiliations and repeated, internalized and verbalized, violence only after she unillegally expresses pride in herself and her "Devil's costume". I.e., costume made by the traditional standards of the male interpretation of the female gender).*

Only after she looks at the audience proudly, with the word joy coming for the first time and gloriously from her lips, does Mantero transcend the deadly system of disrespect, shame and underestimation. And the extent to which the male gender fears disorderly laughter of theater performance is best captured in Eliot's predictably misogynist and **funny** little poem called *Hysteria*. Indeed, Eliot was deadly serious about *The Male Waste Land*.

## DE

Let us part with general remarks about Irena Sajo's oeuvre, paradigmatic in their thematology and gendered, masculine subjects. Although I think that death in Sajo's works tends to be too fetishistic, I regard her plays highly for their ecstatic and lyrical writing style and for the energy of the conflicts they raise. She goes very far indeed in rejecting the unjust or cowardly behavior and she manages to dissociate herself from *The Shooter's* regime, yet her cognitive double always wears the mask of Death (as the lock-of-choice), not the one of reproductivity/life/freedom. Is this death some kind of revolutionary or 'radical' negativity? My answer is no. After Shezshale Felman, I find radical negativity in 'the analytic or performative dimension of thought: at once what makes it an act' (cf. Felman, 1993: 165). And death is not a performance, it is a state of absence, opposite to the theater and its corporeal presence. To stage death itself - as Sajo does - is of course a contradictory and powerful gesture, and that is what makes Sajo's work so exciting. On a less obvious level, she reminds me of Christopher Marlowe and his Faustian paradox: passionately debating with God about God's non-existence. Another paradox surfaces when we try to defend the liveness of the theater over 'dead' literary forms. I will not repeat here Philip Auslander's (1998) outstanding arguments, but I will side with him and with similar theoreticians who recognize that all theater performances,

no matter how "physically" explicit and how undivorceable form "the present moment", do however employ different "deadly" forms of verbal representation and mediation. Stage and representation never travel apart. And moving a step further: Sajo's plays about the "living" of death share the notion of necrosis; Thanatos becomes our regular friend; Angel of Death our familiar stage companion. **Death is therefore not only the king of dissociation, but also the president of the liminal and hence the theater director as well** (elaboration of the theater as liminal zone is of course a favorite topic of Victor Turner's). The feminist signature of Sajo's writing is her - by all means theatrical - irreverence for the most sacred boundaries: boundaries between liveness and death. That being accomplished, the dissociated or plural self of her protagonists becomes able to shatter the pyramid of the whole patriarchal or discriminative hierarchy. Death is wisely used as the final curtain that makes all of us - inclusively and permanently - other. And also "equal" in our **liminal frenzy**. As Sajo's Medea explains: *I could only be tied down/ never calmed down/ never settled down,/ never at rest.*

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**Ivana Sajo**, *Rekonstruiranje izmišljenog prostora i vremena*

**Boris Šnajder**, *Dandy ili san glavočijeke na*

**Boris Šnajder**, *Poljeznica Jaki*

**Boris Šnajder**, *Stjepan*

**Mate Savić** is a theatre critic.



dance

90s

# 90s visiting art

written by  
goran sergej pristal

In what way can a dance performance be put together without a dance studio, a budget, a producer, an educator, degree-granting dancing schools of higher education, marketing and a space in which to perform it? The Internet? No. Multimedia? No. Virtual reality? No. Croatia?

The nineties prolonged a long-standing agony of the infrastructure, possibilities and diffusion of dance in Croatia. Croatian dance has continued to exist within the framework of inherited conceptions from the fifties, when a certain cultural elitist of the socialist realist school, answered a ballet company's request for a subsidy: "Do ballerinas get salaries too?" Although dance has occupied an increasingly significant place in the evolution of the Croatian cultural scene for years, until the beginning of the new century the total subsidy for dance in Croatia was smaller than individual subsidies of certain independent theater companies. Such cultural strategy led us to a point where, in the nineties, a great number of dancers and choreographers left the country in search of work, and after their return to Croatia they encountered trafficking in "dancing riches" which was logically a consequence of the bloody battle for small subsidies from an equally small "take". It seems that the beginning of the new century, which can and be associated with a change of government, at least brings hopeful promises in the fundamental acknowledgement of dance as art. Today dance is the only art in Croatia that does not even have its own space for rehearsal and professional improvement, nor scene. There are no committed dance producers, college-level dancing schools for support. However, the things that are available have, on the one hand, shaped the unique dance scene charged with electricity, and, on the other, established a critical mass of people that can no longer be neglected by any cultural politics. Here we shall talk about precisely those people who offered new options in the regard of dance scene inherited from the eighties, namely the new school of chore production and expression which, it could

now already be said, would mark the following decade in the performing art's generally.

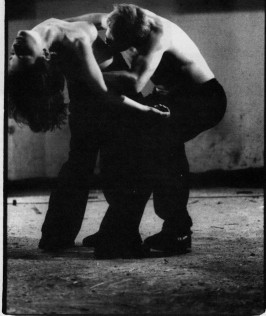
## The nineties and their Don Quixotes

The first sign of a possible awakening of the dance scene appeared and shattered the customary idea that a choreographer develops out of the following: aged education at a secondary dancing school, dancing career in a company, the end of a career's career, the first attempts at choreography.

The man who broke away from that customary view was Rado Šeparović, the founder of The Ministroy Theatre. His first choreography *Everybody Goes To Disco From Moscow To San Francisco* with a special event for a dancing contest in Bagnolet. To Šeparović, this award was an initial impulse for about seventy performances both in Europe and USA, while in Croatia he managed to present the performance only once and for charity at that. The reasons were simple: in order to carry out the performance, it was necessary to present it in one of the repertory dance theaters. The theatre in which the show was performed offered not even a minimum of professional conditions, so that Šeparović decided to donate all the proceedings to a charitable fund, and the dancers performed without receiving their fees. After that performance, Šeparović tried to make a co-production contract in several theatres in Zagreb, but, even granted the good will, there were no resources and funds were simply not available. Eventually, the last realized project was co-produced by a number of European producers. Two festivals, *Zadar of dreams* and *The Dance Week* festival, invested in that project either in a form of the artist's residence system or through the presentation of the performance.

In the late nineties Šeparović moved to the Netherlands where today he works with his group called *Performing List*. However, Šeparović played an important role on several levels. First of all, his performers, like Šeparović himself,

Sagredo Barrio Company (1991): CON LICARIO SACRILEG OPIARIO





Monitoring: EVERYBODY GOES TO DISCO FROM MOSCOW 2 SAN FRANCISCO

had mostly no formal education in dancing. Almost as if having created an aesthetic following, he started off and gathered the whole generation of young artists who, even today, play a significant role not only in dance, but also in music, dramaturgy, the visual arts, design etc. His joining to the international trend of high-risk dance was marked by specific qualities that did not pass unnoticed in the context of the international production.

Both in terms of subject and expression the performance *Everybody Goes 2 Disco From Moscow 2 San Francisco* dealt with experience of the East European context, the context of transition and violence, but also of 'someone else's' stereotype, which would be emphasized in his next production. *Everybody Goes 2 Disco...* arose out of the modernist revolt under the strong influence of Meyerhold's biomechanics, used in Šeparović's previous project called *Ras Opera 101*, while Fragile turns to East European mysticism and recycles the ideas of the third theatre in the West European context. In terms of subject the performance revolves round the idea of identity's convertibility: performers from several European countries gathered in the performance and their projections were juxtaposed into the myth about conversion of Saul into St. Paul. Radicalized identities, problems of an individual's relationship with a gap in his own physical reality as well as with a gap in objectivity of his identity, an issue of language ranging from repression by the political correctness to

repression by itself - all this helped to make the performance that has become a cult in the East European context, while in the West it has been regarded with disapproval that could be attributed to the failure 'of the performance to fit in the contemporary' trends of breaking free from intense concepts as well as from production based on 'individual confessions' that always sound similar. The fact is that not one international dance company can survive by performing at the East European festivals, so Šeparović had to abandon the performance and set out in search for a new way in which to organize his production that could ensure not only essential working conditions, but also independence from the dominant trends of novelty which soon become the mainstream. Mari Šeparović emerged from the generation of dancers who distinguished themselves in the Zagreb Dance Company which, together with The Contemporary Dance Studio, has been the backbone of Croatian dance scene for years. After withdrawing from the company she founded her own company, Studio Mari, in which performers get together for a particular project. One of the features of her production is a constant co-operation with the performers who are not part of the dance establishment, but who have significantly participated in various kinds of performances and whose artistic optimism has grown after participation in her projects.

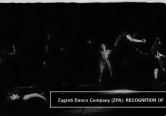


Stasja Marč: CARTOGRAPHY

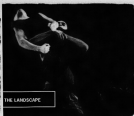
Her trilogy *The Parasols*, *Touch A Wicked Woman* and *Erzsi And Poyche* reflected the need for high aestheticism of dance production in all its aspects - from movement to design of the performance. The reaction was logical, since the earlier production was based on visual ideas from the seventies which, on one the hand, were marked by poverty-stricken theatre and, on the other, by the conception of beautiful in a sense of romantic and sentimental. In terms of subject the trilogy is two-tracked: we find exploration of the complexity of male-female relationships on the one hand, and observation of the performers' changes through their personal life experiences on the other.

The first more radical change in the work of Mare Šesandić came with her performance *Under The Rainbow* which, after its presentation at the first selection of *The Airwaves Project*, successfully appeared at numerous international festivals. In this minimalist duet the process of passing through various choreographic challenges, based on contacts and harmony, also indicates the theme of the performance - a journey towards one's aim which is on the other side of the barrier. Her last performance, *Cartography*, is another radical shift in her own expression. Šesandić has shifted her focus from surface and calculation to a landscape of the body, space and imagination. Thus the body becomes the scene of penetration into the depth of the surface, but also a map of emotions and self-sacrifice.

The person who played the most significant role in rethinking of the physical presence and movement in the theatre of the nineties is a choreographer Jasna Frankić-Briždžić who was also unacknowledged by the Croatian dance establishment, but who does not see these acknowledgments as a proof of her success. Her choreographies are seen in traces in the performances of some other authors or in her own performances which first emphasize a phenomenon, and only then her own authorship. Her most important works were achieved in co-operation with Branko Brezovec, the doyen of the Croatian theatre radicalism. A respect for a performer's competence and abilities is what could be said to be her transformation and an important involvement in Brezovec's choreographic thought. Working with actors who had little or no education in dancing, Jasna Frankić-Briždžić insisted on refinement of their bodies through the body's potential of its movements, instead of trying to reach a peak of their performing skills. Therefore her choreographies are never fascinating in terms of skill, but in the way she achieves the potential of the body to be readable. The body never speaks for itself, but it offers patterns and matrices which should be formed in combination with the scene, the text, and the expressive and imaginative moment of the performance. Her last individualistic performance *Fullan* was made in co-operation with a folk dance troupe



Zagreb Dance Company (ZPA): RECOGNITION OF



THE LANDSCAPE

whose dancers brought their own mythology into the performance that is choreographically fragmented. There is an abundance of material with whose origin we are not familiar, but which nevertheless creates a sense of meaning.

One of those who has succeeded in securing his place among distinguished authors of the nineties is Rajko Pavlić, manager of The Liberdance Company. His last project *The Sun Staged Gazing at Miraclegrove* out of the exploration of the ethnographic dance material. In his project Pavlić successfully related the power of deeply emotive traditional sensibility with traditions of the contemporary dance expression. The performance is dominated by confidence in rhythm which, in co-operation with composer Staniko Jukić, resulted in such an expression in which the contemporary experience of 'tradition' and tradition of the contemporary dance are combined. Rajko Pavlić is a choreographer who repeatedly shows an increasingly deep interest in improvisation as part of the process of rehearsing. Still, his performances seem as spatially visual energetic strategies conditioned by the high quality as well as competence of the performers whom Pavlić was looking for even among ballet dancers.

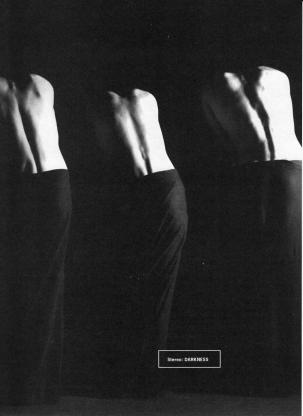
## Dance companies and projects

There are two dance companies that are the backbone of the Croatian dance production: 'Zagreb dance company' (ZPA) and 'The Contemporary Dance Studio' (CCSF). During the period of these decades many important performers and authors of the local dance scene have participated in the companies' rehearsals and performances.

In the nineties, under the guidance of Sejanina Abramović, ZPA turned to foreign choreographers trying, on the one hand,

to professionalize the dance scene and enable dancers to develop in co-operation with foreign educators/authors, and trying to raise standards of production according to the experiences of a wider dance context on the other. Therefore there were several performances in their production that marked the mainstream of Croatian dance, but also changed the image of what quality performance is. The first significant project was made in co-production with the Catalan dance company *Lacrima Imperial*, entitled *Recognition of landscape*. It is a complex dance production with several strategic levels of meaning. Working with a combined group of both his own and local performers, Juan Carlos García created a performance which, perhaps most impressively, reflected the experience of war and hopelessness, i.e. the actual environment in which he was working. Trouble area became the landscape of García's performance - a changing cartography, an image disclosing space and reducing the essential precisely in order to show the essential. The map of his performance, which brings the natives back into relationships diffused in the actual space, was a renewal of the landscape. Not trying to impose any personal interpretations of devastated and war-torn environment, both subjective and objective, García offered a reminder of the place where the performers lived, the place which became part of his own daily record. The following production was a choreography by Bebo Gidra, a dancer of *Lacrima Imperial*, entitled *Caradones de cascade*, which contains emotive Latin matrices. This production indicated ZPA's orientation towards the style which is dominant in productions based on 'release techniques'. But the most significant result of the performance was a new generation of dancers, whose determination to pursue their dancing careers as well as





Styler: CARRARO



their great professional competence made it clear they could not be bypassed in future dance production. This was also confirmed by the most significant production of the nineties – the performance *Cow Licario Sacro* Opplano directed by Jesse Taran from Venezuela. The choreography was performed by Jelena Vukmirica, Aleksandra Jerusa, Nikola Bujan and Prerad Deslaherević.

The usual cliché about dance, as a mastery skill of, exclusively, a choreographer working with technically well equipped dancers, were broken down by the project which developed through improvisations of every single performance. This was an exceptionally challenging and demanding performance based on tensions ranging from revolt, hysteria to pleasure, and characterized by power of expression as well as by extraordinary optimism towards art. Although it could be said that the author's conceptual approach is the trademark of the performance, it would be difficult to detach ourselves from capacity and potential of the performers, who are the backbone of that performance. It is precisely these performers who ensure the final result of the performance, since the entire dance structure is based on controlling and relieving their bodies of hysteria.

SSP also had significant productions made in co-operation with foreign choreographers, among which the Slovene choreographer Matjaž Pantič should be singled out for his

performance *Stravinsky and I*. Although the performance came about from a conventional understanding of the boundary line between dance and acting, it was a rare attempt to connect the two contexts which are radically disconnected in Croatian performing arts. SSP's other performances are also characterized by a narrative organization of dance material; for instance, the performance *Big is Beautiful*. The important role of the authors and dancers who are gathered around the SSP includes production of dance performances for children. These very transparent and popularizing performances, choreographed by Desanka Vranić, are among the most popular children's shows in Croatia.

Dance companies have continuously reflected the conditions of performing potentials on the Croatian dance scene, insofar as under the term 'dancing scene' we refer to those authors and performers who have continuously been working and performing in Croatia. Although dance companies have been supported inadequately, still they provide occasional educators, insufficient but indispensable fees and at least some opportunities for a continuous work at the studio, which they share according to the contract with The Željeznik Theatre. A major drawback for both dance companies (the ZPA and SSP) is their lack of confidence in their own personnel as potential authors,



BSP. WHO IS BEAUTIFUL.

which resulted in the fact that, during the last ten years, not a single significant production has been put together in participation with younger Croatian choreographers. Croatian choreographers in their prime, who worked in those dance companies, not only established their own poetics, already well known from the eighties, but also encountered various problems as a consequence of attempting to pass literary influences onto dance. Undoubtedly a new generation of dancers has emerged within the two dance companies, and should the companies' strategy as well as the cultural politics in Croatia support these dancers, they could very well become the exponents of our dance scene. There are the names that are being associated with all important dancing productions in Croatia today: Aleksandra Janosa, Larisa Lipovčić, Mikelina Bojan, Ana Jurč, Jelena Vučkirić, Zrinka Lukšec, Andreja Široki, Tamara Čurk, Pravičan Devetaković and Bojan Valentić.

The mid-nineties crisis of Croatian dance had an impact on a heterogeneous group of authors, under the name of **'LLINKITI dance project'**, who gathered round a homogeneous idea - to promote Croatian dance. In their occasional appearances this unpredictable group of authors would break through conventions of the settled and well-established system of production. Regularly, until now, LLINKITI took the opportunity to present their dance performances under the sponsorship of the 'International Dance Day' celebration. In the course of time, however, the group presented several independent and more complex projects. Definitely the most interesting choreographer in the group is Iva Nerina Gatin whose idea of movement is based on the research of the androgynous, the dance that

goes beyond the categories of male and female. The choreographies of Iva Nerina Gatin seem like fragments shown outside the fetish-like organized presentation, so to speak, as objects exposed to one's gaze. Further on, her choreographies have been avoiding the market completely, and it could be said that her reputation rests largely on impression rather than on opinion. Therefore she takes an active part in site-specific projects, which, however, is not a sufficient evidence of one's existence.

There are two other choreographers who realize and present their choreographies under the 'LLINKITI' project: Ljiljana Zagorec and Katja Šimunić. The former's explorations of dance are based on movement being framed into geometrically objective space, while the latter's choreographies are, in most cases, literary models actualized through associative processes.

A fulltime dancer at Philippe Decouflé's dance company, Inna Gomerio, has also been presented by 'LLINKITI', and next year she intends to make her off-owning choreography debut. A crucial role in professional training of the entire generation of dancers was played by a French choreographer, Kikila Cremona, who is now the manager of 'The Croatian National Ballet Theatre' in Split. Kikila Cremona first started working as a professional educator at dance companies in Zagreb, and afterwards she founded 'The Dance Centre Athenai', which has been educating new dancers continually in such a way as to organize workshops with guest educators from abroad.

Under the guidance of Mirna Žagar and Vladimir Stjepančević, 'The Croatian Movement And Dance Institute' (MIFI) has played an undoubtedly important role organizing several



BAD co. / MARK CHAM

influential projects. The most significant and long-lasting project is 'The Dance Week Festival' where the most prominent events on the contemporary dance scene have been presented for the past twenty years, both in Croatia and abroad.

In the nineties, HPP took the initiative in educating dancers and established 'The Moving Academy for Performing Arts Zagreb' which, however, suffered a debacle due to the fact that it has been recognized neither by Croatian filmmakers nor by the professional horse scene. The most relevant results the project has achieved so far, belong to the sphere of mime theatre which has become very popular both with the audience as well as with performers. However, there are numerous problems that mime theatre encounters today conceptualized as the most spontaneous of all performing arts, mime has been transformed into a very limited art (in terms of expression) which actually gets results only on the metaphorical level of understanding behaviours. Today HPP has taken an important initiative in instituting 'The National Centre Of Dance' whose project has been defined precisely by the exponents of the dancing scene, and whose realization is expected to occur in the near future with support of the Ministry of culture and the City of Zagreb.

This year a new 'Festival of dance and moving theatre' has been set up in Croatia and it takes place in a culturally highly developed region of Istria, since there has been a need for the relocation of dancing projects from Zagreb. This festival is one of the few successful dance projects outside Zagreb, whose aim is to try to solve the constant problem of diffusion of dance in Croatia. With respect to this, Rajko Pašić, whom we have already mentioned, plays an important role in organizing summer workshops in Pula under the guidance of young Croatian dancing educators.

## Should it happen...

Should Croatia really get its national dance centre, great new possibilities would open up for continuous work of both choreographers as well as dancers. It would enable them to explore the problems that, until now, they have been trying to solve only in terms of the 'hijacked' terminology of theatre studies.

There are certain indications that the new generation of dancers could give rise to a new generation of choreographers. Among these from whom much is expected, are certainly Inna Omerski, Ksenija Čarić-Zec, Jasna Vinovrtić (who dances in Basel for the time being), Irena Müller (who continuously works in Amsterdam) and Marija Šokčić (who recently returned from her schooling in Canada). New works are also expected from Emil Matelić, after the appearance of his successful twenty-minute choreography 'Darkness', which lost its charge in the expanded all-evening performance of the same title. Although in the mid-nineties Matelić raised a lot of dust in the dancing circles, unfortunately, until now, his performances have been out of keeping with his marked ambition. Two choreographers, Natalja Lulietić and Barbara Miroković, who have already participated in several international productions, are also expected to appear with somewhat more consistent and more analytical choreographies in years to come. Another thing that has been heralded are new performances of young choreographers who are gathered around three new projects: an independent group 'Oberia', artistic co-operation 'BAD co.' and 'Dance Centre TALIA'. The revival of the dance scene in Split, where Katarina Geronzi works now, is also to be expected. In the future, Croatian dance has to take several important steps that would help it to turn to the environment from which it emerges. If it should become accepted by society and the cultural milieu, dance may, after all, prove itself to be neither an art 'visiting Croatia' nor an art performed exclusively by visiting dancers. (Translated by Sandra Petri)

Goran Sergej Prištin is a dramaturgist, director and editor-in-chief of *Prolog*.



**space**

90s

# 90s frames

written by  
Irena Gallo

Visual identity of Croatian performing arts in the 1990s, i.e. the conceptualization of its settings, was shaped primarily by the contemporary visual artists who, free from the terror of scenery and undisturbed with individualized stage aesthetics, have introduced their concepts of the space underlying the action, i.e. the play. Thomas Miliutec, Somo Lipavac, Goran Petencol, Slaven Tolj, Sven Stilleović or Mijetko Ščudić have all established themselves as recognizable stage designers with specific ways of solving the spatial problems set by the dramaturgy and production.

Apart from perhaps the most successful authors, the Jeličić/Rajković couple, there is also the set designing concept of Somo Lipavac, whose ideas are on the track of the search for the dramatic in the real for the dramatic character in the private person, for the piece of drama in spontaneous speech, or for the drama space within the real, theatre space. In the case of the play *Slowing-down*, the audience enter from the rear, go through the corridors where the dressingrooms and showers are, and find their seats doubled on the stage itself. On the walls, Lipavac hung household objects, such as a plate and cutlery, or a telephone, which in terms of visual arts bear resemblance to ready-made installations, but seen in the context of Bobo Jeličić and Nataša Rajković's theatrical discourse, these objects transform into photographs of motifs, that represent the distillate of the sphere of real and set up the dramatic situation. The scene in which the actress, waiting for the audience to take their seats, puts down her cigarette as the ashtray vertically attached to the wall, represents an inauguration of the entanglement element of the real, with the final goal of bringing about theatre. In the following production, *Uncertain Story*, the setting is reduced, although it remains evident that it is about the same fictitious house, set on the same setting position. Lipavac removed objects: a drink warmer or a glass from the kitchen table, so that there are only a few chairs and a

wall. The wall facing the audience, however, is not empty. At the very beginning, the ground-plan of an imaginary flat, in which the story between the characters is developed, together with the whole dramaturgical scheme of events that are about to happen in the next hour, is being outlined on it. The ground-plan outline is there as a reminder of a conscious toying with the breachers in presentations and self-presentations, as well as of a transparent usage of the space given not for the purposes of creating fiction, but aiming at its analysis.

The presence of one of the most respectable Croatian visual artists, Goran Petencol, in approaching stage designing, is making use of time and space limitations that build up theatre. In contemporary production of *Shakespeare's Antigone*, directed by Irena Gallo, Petencol sought for solutions of the setting in classical poetics in the Aristotelian doctrine of the unity of space, time and action. In the corner of an empty stage, there is a column which is almost unnoticeably moved across the stage, constantly changing physical movements of the actors and dividing the stage into parts varying in size. In this way, it opens up possibilities of consequently carrying out the entire dramatic content, its positioning, the need to liberate more or more open spaces, all this being done by means of a single object. Different positioning of the column, to the left and to the right, and changing of its shade, denote the orbital period of the Sun, i.e. twenty-four hours during which tragedy is accumulated and resolved. Petencol has found a scenographic solution, in which the only spatial intervention, i.e. the column, whose symbolic meaning is being subdued by meanings and functionally plus moving across the stage, has managed to conceptualize the production and organize its physical action.

Theatre unites two spatial wholes: the stage and the auditorium, both of which are codified by a frame, by kinds of movements and by a standard distance, which is created by organization of their positions and behaviour

Jelčić/ Rajković: "UNCERTAIN STORY", stage design: Goran Lupašev



within them. Contemporary deliberations engage in principal relations between these elements by analysing archetypal theatrical constructions, i.e. by constructing the scene detached from the flood prospect of a picturesque stage, or according to Kessler, *Gesamtszenenbau* (fourth-wall stage). It is not only the internal space organization, its visual quality and rhythm that is important, but also the possibilities of changing and manipulating its boundaries. Theatre escapes the rigidity imposed by the resemblance to the illusionistic image whose content, i.e. area covering the action, is determined by its frame.

The frame of a unidirectional and fixed point of view, then the frame of the Italian box, its archaic authority and symbolic nature within theatre all develop into motifs in Goran Sergej Prištel's production *Confessions*. There is a question of one's own acting space that draws up as a dramaturgical guideline, further pursued in Goran Petecov's stage design. In the first part of *Confessions*, acting takes place primarily on the proscenium, while the background of the stage is covered by a large screen. The whole of that area and the actors, who are out of audience's sight, are partially being filmed and

screened in a stroboscopic technique. During the whole of the first part of the production, the actors in front of the screen have no relation, whatsoever, to the contents displayed on the screen. The camera, for instance, follows the movements of a dancer, enclosed in the back of the Italian box. Maximum space is being halved and separated, but both parts remain visible, although extent in two different presentational forms. Their first encounter occurs on the body of a dancer, who appears on the rim of the proscenium—she is visible from the auditorium, filmed and screened, but still only from the back. The integral body disorients not only between two frames, but also between two spaces, whose differentiation is determined by the observation point. The obstacle to the rear part of the stage is not removed before the second part of the production, which is based on the deconstruction of the performing elements. Strict staging is seemingly being replaced by improvisation and coincidence, and by opening up of the whole stage, the Italian box area finally appears. At that moment, the theatre frame becomes the field, on which the stage dramaturgy emphasizes the already begun examination through dimensions, meanings and possibilities of the acting space given. Petecov



1. Buljan, "RETURN TO THE DESERT", stage design: Slaven Tolj

projects, onto that frame, a photograph of gilded stucco work that builds up a frame of the Italian box of the Croatian National Theatre. The space renders itself as a subject referring both to the ironic context of the death of the play acted and to the fragileness of its structure, to the burden of aesthetics and norms imposed upon it through history. Instead of closing the space with set pieces and instead of redecorating it, Petarcol approaches the space as a potential, charged with ever new meanings, whereby the set designer's task would be to find and recognize the method that would make this apparent. Set designing refers not only to the contents of the production and movements of the performing bodies, but also to the wider context of the performance, and its cultural and institutional features.

Every new theatre space is a kind of new territory that imposes upon each production not only the frames measured in square metres, but also all sorts of artistic criteria securing aesthetic and cultural uniqueness of the theatre. Recognition of these givens provided a new frame one could refer to. Slaven Tolj's set design for the *Return to the Desert* production, directed by Ivica Buljan, represents an example of an ironic distance from the visual attractiveness, monumentality and local monopolistic position of the Croatian National Theatre in Split. Tolj's simplified set design functioned as an aesthetic antipode to the theatre's architecture. At the same time, the opening of a crimson curtain functioned as an act of irony, since on the stage there were only a derided trunk and a house cut in two. Kolčić's text on hypocrisy and cruelties of provincialism has found shape on the stage: a petty bourgeois home without walls, audience playing a self-critical role of voyeurs, and, moreover, the cultural context of a city desperately fighting provincialism. Naturally, these sorts of information networking on and off the stage

2. S. Petarcol, "COMPASSION", stage design: Goran Petarcol



bear relevance only in case when both the viewer and the author belong to the same sign recognition system, and are aware of the ideological and critical potentials, brought by every spatial intervention.

In the rest of Buljan's productions, the Kolčić monologue *A Night at the Edge of the Wood*, Tolj communicates again with the performance space, although this time he does not engage in aesthetic confrontations, but radically narrows borders by different use of lights and organization of auditorium. The audience enters the amorphous, dark room and take seats on the benches semicircularly set in front of a wall onto which the bluish light, representing the window glass, is cast. The actor, poured down with water, stands there leaning against the wall, literally forced to the rectangular frame of the light cast. The audience's range of vision is also riveted, they haven't got a choice, except for the claustrophobic latitude of a light source, producing an agonizing effect of confinement. When during the curtain call the light is cast over the whole theatre, the space for time bigger opens up: the vacuum that was gaping in the darkness, while the performance was taking place on just a couple of square metres. It is also possible to fill in the frames of a specific spatial potential with poetic meanings. This is the case in most of the set designing solutions of Miljenko Sekulić, a set designer who in the 1990s collaborated with Paolo Magelli in most of his productions of classic Russian authors, such as Chekhov and Turgenev, as well as in his most recent projects, *Abi, Nora, Nora* and Krieda's *Karmess*. In the context of getting a broader perspective of Croatian theatre, the role Sekulić played in it could be compared to that of Paolo Magelli. They introduce high-ranking aestheticism, taking the non-existing place of acknowledged authors coming from large theatres, and assume the necessity for large theatrical companies and





I. Bulkin: "ANTIGONE", stage design: Goran Petrovcić



P. Magelli: "KLEINER", stage design: Miljenko Sekulić



P. Magelli: "TRI SESTRE", stage design: Tihomir Milovac

organization of their stage presentation, i.e. the necessity for the stage construction of both the ambience and that ambience-quality that is capable of turning the stage into a landscape of symbols, a psychological stimulus and that is being inscribed in an existentialist manner into the mood of the performance acted. The set organization is solved by emptying the stage, so that later it would expand up to its limits, within which the monochrome surface covered in materials such as sand, maize or sawdust is brought about. The reduction in set pieces leaves enough room for bodies within the space liberated from inner obstacles, so that at the same time its gaping vastness nurtures dramatic situations, which acting refers to. The set designing impressionism is supported by the same aesthetic code of a drama-pattern. The indented stage space is subordinated to the play, and in its ambience quality the narratives take place parallelly, thus creating a subtle cacophony of lines and images. The transparency of the illusion, however, is constantly present on bare theatre walls, and as such, it inscribes itself into the contents of the play, in which the frame, i.e. the limit denoting the impossibility of change, represents the tragic reality of the dramatic personae. The space itself becomes in this way a dramatic character, who evolves with regard to other dramatic personae, and with regard to interrelations of other theatre elements, as well as to the observations and expectations of the viewers themselves. Its organization directs bodily movements, whose three-dimensionality constitutes the basis for deliberating constitutive elements that set up the performance limits together with frames, within which the performer in action is viewed.

Tihomir Milovac is the most frequent collaborator of the



B. Brezovic: "ISO ISO", stage design: Tihomir Milovac

Croatian cult director, Branko Brezovic (ISO ISO, Bacchanalia, Emma, Essays etc...). The part he plays in set designing represents, actually, an attempt of a visual montage of a furious system of signs and intertextual layers, that emerge as a result of deciphering Brezovic's productions, alongside with which the set designer followed the director's logic: he insists on space dynamics taking it up to its limits, he constructs movable set constructions that can be taken apart, he covers surfaces with showings, and transforms the stage organism by constructing and deconstructing the already made fractals. Milovac's interventions are not to be regarded only from the visual or functional point of view, but also through the necessity of their visual contextualization in fields of intermediarity. His space represents a form of ever transforming action, and by its structure and signs inscribed, it affects the dynamics of bodies existing within it. It is constituted from the need to interact with the world, i.e. with the audience and their, social, art and cultural foreknowledge. The borders of stage territory are turned upside down into a borderless space, and by comparing them, the dramaturgical context of a production is constructed (Petecot, Lopaire). They serve as assumptions for creating irony and indignation against aesthetic symbols representing a particular institution (Toll), they intensify the unrestrainedness and imbue with different positions from which the space is filled in (Milovac). Finally, the territorial frames are being personified into an active protagonist (Sekulic). The space abides by, essentially, speculating upon itself.

(Translated by Iva Ćoraki)

Ivana Rigo is a dramaturgist, writer and a member of editorial board of *Frankje*.



**performance**



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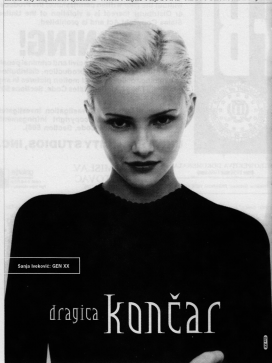


UML Tomislav Gotovac: PARANCA VIEW ART EDA

artistic device." (exposition booklet, Gallery GDT, Zagreb, 1986) The question of the individual's freedom in a given space-temporal frame, which Gotovac has been developing as an aggressive paranoia imposing its own obsessive idea to the world around it, in the nineties no longer refers to a totalitarian politics of a given regime, but to the all-encompassing global functioning. His performance *Adjusting to the Objects on the Maršal Tito Square* (1997) aims precisely at the tyranny of the quotidian and the violence of the environment. The two hour action began at noon, as Gotovac's actions and performances, directorial disciplines in which he is the director, protagonist and producer, often do. Dressed in a workman's overall, with Howard Hawks emblazoned on the back (his usual practice of dedicating works to great filmmakers), Gotovac systematically goes around the Maršal Tito Square adjusting his body to the architectural shapes and the inventory of the Square: Mestrovic's Fountain of Life, the railings, the pavement, the steps, the benches... The Square named after the character Gotovac deal with in

a series of performances *Hommage to Josip Broz Tito* (1980) - consisting of the simple acts of Reading the Papers, Listening to the Radio, Watching Television, Telephoning, and problematising the relationships of global direction of information consumption - is treated in this performance as a site of architectural coercion. On this Square the national theatre building is located, as well as a university building and a museum - all key institutions of the hegemonic culture and education - and at the same time it is a scene of everyday duress imposed by the prescribed lines of movement, uses of the inventory, prescribed actions, obeying borderlines and property. The tricks in the art of doing Michel de Certeau speaks of, which enable individuals subject to global restrictions of the modern, especially urban, society to avoid them, creating their own environment and ways through various cunning strategies, are radically individualised in Gotovac's work. The body systematically exploring the borders of objects and movement, inscribing them in itself and forcing viewers to follow it, takes over

Ubijena zbog anti-fašističke djelatnosti. Mučena i ubijena u Zagrebu 1942. Starost u trenutku smrti: 29 godina



Sanja Iveković - GEN XX

dragica končar

GEN



MAJAK, TOJ, PERFORMANCE



ČURBOWEK, VALESCA, ČURBOWEK



the function of cultural protection. His performances in the eighties (e.g., *Lying Naked on the Tarmac*, 1981; or *The Exhibitionist Performance / Displaying the Genitalia*, 1989) politicise individuality in a totalitarian society which does not acknowledge it, while in the nineties Gotovac tries to escape the terror of choosing individuality conceived either as so many average individuals or as the mean average of the individuals. For decades, Gotovac worked from a mid-position, first as the avant-garde of the so-called new artistic practice of the '70s, a part of which he eventually becomes, then as the link with a younger generation of artists. In 1996 he works in a group for the first time, on the project *Weekend Art: Hallelujah the HILL*. The project consists of Sunday excursion to the Sijeno hilltop, a mythical site for Croatian conceptual art ever since the days of Gorgona and Kolaric's last art idea *Carving the Hilltop* (1980). Tomislav Gotovac and Ivana Reiser act out this performance which has been going on from 1996, while Aleksandar Bć is the director, participant, organiser and producer. Appropriating the imposed and turning it in to one's own advantage, finding the trick in the art of doing which characterises Gotovac's performance *Adjusting to the Objects on the Maršal Tito Square*, is realised in the *Weekend Art* project as a political gesture twisting the pejorative sense of the Sunday artist in the circumstances of transitional impoverishment and unacceptable political surroundings, opening up the possibility of avoiding the dictates of social and political context. An interest in thinking through one's own position in the system of the labour market, i.e. defining the co-ordinates of values and meanings of artistic work in a

broader social structure by means of documenting Sunday excursions into the countryside, challenges the opposition of leisure and working hours, positioning them in a single field of the fluctuation of capital. The performance of Sunday excursions, presented on the Internet, as a series of postcards or as slide projections in a gallery, demonstrates a strong interest in the processes of documenting and distributing, and in the transformations of the work in various media, distancing it completely from the imperative of the physical presence of the body as a guarantee of authenticity. The tension between performance and its media presentation has been explored by Saša Iveković from the early seventies. Her performances often include video technology or are realised as private acts documented on videotape and made public through being displayed in a gallery. In the sixties, the artist deals in the media in the action *Gen XX*, which consists of publishing photographs of famous models, accompanied by the name of a female hero from World War II, the year of her execution and her age at the time of death, in various magazines. The problem of collective amnesia with a reference to recent past is developed in the performance *Repetitio est roator*, not media-treated but adopting the existing medium, the letters which women fighters in the Partisan resistance movement wrote in captivity. These women were hailed as war heroes under socialism and forgotten in the nineties. The performance is based on immediate bodily presence, on the experience shared by the audience and the artist, as she transcribes, word for word, the text of the letter projected on the wall. The text, completely



Dario Frešo: END OF THE MESSAGE

illegible at first, is gradually opened up to meaning through re-writing, becoming inscribed in the common present from which it has been erased. The line of development of the media mediation of performance is expressed in a particular way in the works of a number of younger artists who associate performance, action and body art exclusively with certain ways of media presentation. The video works of Alen Florić can thus be read as edited documents of a performance for the camera. A particular emphasis on the body as a live organic object, reduced to basic bodily functions of simple twitching or breathing, Florić edits a poor image of his own body repeating the same movement more like an organism and less like a body. The sliding of body art into exclusively digital recording treats the body as something perceived by the means of representation, thus becoming a social construct the physical existence of which is binding. In the nineties the artists again pay attention to the fact that we are prisoners of our physical existence, which is particularly pronounced in the performances of the Dubrovnik artists Slaven Tolj and Božo Jurjević. Slaven Tolj's performance *Food for Survival* (1993), in which the artists paints his body and that of his female partner in the nourishing mass of humanitarian aid, which they then lick off one another, is directly contextualised in the siege of Dubrovnik. The performances of Božo Jurjević included danger, risk and physical suffering of the artist, not a prominent feature in Croatian performing art. In *Eclipse* (1997), the artist is strapped to Kolarik's sculpture



Slaven Tolj, Alen Florić: WEEKEND ART

*Limited Sun* in Bogović Street, from which he painfully and in vain tries to free himself. The mythic character of pointless effort seems more like an agitation than an act of resignation in the context of public performance. Dissociating oneself from the tradition of conceptual artistic practice and its reception, as presented by Kolarik's repeatedly moved and destroyed sculpture, becomes in Jurjević's performance an act the very futility of which demands repeated new efforts. The practice of Croatian performance art in the nineties moves in the same context of repeatedly redrawn boundaries of tradition. (Translated by Tomislav Brlek.)

Natasha Bli is an art historian.



A black and white photograph of a person holding a megaphone. The person is in profile, facing right, and is holding the megaphone with both hands. The megaphone is dark and has a large, flared horn. The person is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**out of institutions**

90s

# dr. inat in the alternative theatre of the nineties

written by  
suzana marjanic

ideology is neither good nor bad in itself.  
It all depends on the moment we endorse it.  
Lisel M. Gloran

## Once upon a time: or, the beginnings of the alternative theatre in the theatre of war

The unfinished, probably never-ending, and uncertain story of the Croatian alternative theatre of the nineties – and here I invoke the opinion of Branko Šuljac on what the phrase alternative theatre really means today, which he has managed to state in a single sentence: 'However, to really engage with the alternative theatre – though I am not quite sure I know what it is anymore – means to have nice lies, lie through everything and keep on working.'<sup>1</sup> Let us go back to the beginning of my sentence – the beginning of a fairly un-fairy-tale chronology of the Croatian alternative theatre could be marked by the Postscriptum in Opatje (2) of June – 14th July 1991), where, after the rehearsal was run over by a tank, the participants of the real theatre became the audience for the beginning of the theatre of war.<sup>2</sup> The epoch recognized itself in theatre, and, even more importantly, theatre recognized itself in the current epoch: the ongoing events seemed it like time well organized and chaotic. There was nothing that could stop the ongoing performance of politics and war.<sup>3</sup> Montafing and their performance *Rap Opera 101* have been selected for the off-programme of Eurokaz in the first war year, and the profits were donated to the Croatian army. Other selections from the Croatian alternative theatre within *HerStudio for Kinetic and Figurative Sculpture: The Case of Ljiljana Alješević & Ivana Popović* with *Current Bomb*, the theatre company *Palkeš* with

*Harmed (Šuljac)*, and the *Scared Graphics* with the choreo-performance *Shard Drive*. Within the dislocation of the war reality, two theatre signs – the golden *Kalashnikov* from *Rap Opera 101* and the *Current Bomb* of Ivana Popović – penetrated the context of war. In *Rap Opera 101*, which was made using the *Philoctetes* myth and the biography of the constructor M.T. Kalashnikov, *Philoctetes/Kalashnikov/Parasol* is being seated in a golden wheelchair, for the pure society is founded on the mentally handicapped.

The *Current Bomb* production/performance establishes the relationship with a baleful time in which the first (fortunately not current) masculine bombs were about to start falling. (I must, however, notice that the theatre's naivete of the LDR has by many been undertaken as a childlike fairy tale. I have, as I usually do with fairy tales, taken it all too seriously, which has probably been induced by the cold breakthroughs I felt during the *Postscriptum*, which regardless of its name had started before *Eurokaz*.) While the wheelchair of *Rap Opera 101* represented the regaling place of a harmless man, since contagious thought represents the most dangerous disorder, the art-for-art's sake confuse bombs were conceived as the gingerbread hearts of the national kitsch symbols. Their art comes out of deficiency, since beautiful kitsch-cakes, baked by twin-cooks, have no taste. As the confuse business is going down, the cakes are exhibited in a gallery and the twins become the most famous pop art sculptors. In politics, as a kitchen without any flavours, the bomb becomes a sweet intoxicide.

<sup>1</sup> 'Kazalište kao lažna civilizacija', *provideno od dr. Branka Šuljaca*, *Intervju: izveštaj iz Opatje*, *Život* 36, 30th Apr. 2000, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ljiljana Alješević: "moguća postapokaliptična katastrofa"', *Život* 36, Young Theatre Festival 2 (Postscriptum), 20th Apr. 1991.

<sup>3</sup> *Standard Standard: Theatre of the 90s in the Former Yugoslavia*, *TCR: The Drama Research Journal* 41 (London) 3 (2000), pp. 1-15, <http://www.sda.ac.uk>.



of the post-war "reconstruction discourse"<sup>45</sup> and of a potential apocalypse of peace. *State of the Moon* and *Macbeth* productions were also staged at the Eursko festival the same year. Giga Gracan expressed her wonder at the fact that Daska was not there with the "mythifying" *Waiting for Bread*: "The audience, unfortunately, did not see *Waiting for Bread*, God knows why" (Vojinac 40, 13th July, 1995, p. 37.)

Soll, Kugla was present at the Eurokaz festival, especially during its war-years. At the first Eurokaz (1987) with *Zeinimuro*, and during the war with a performance about the Exarchate of toil, Ladoreen exercises (1992), in which physical labour animal and a stock exchange market, a place of "savage jaws," are questioned, Ponytail (1993) deals with animalized audience and political animals: ponytail is the nickname of the political animal Arkon (the Tatar word *arkan* means hero, hero), while the idea of war-primes as a criminal prosthesis of the ruling mind paraphrases Heraclitus' fragment 53: war elevates some as criminals.<sup>18</sup> The production *Jedakdo Jedakdo* (1994) deals with the innocence of a child-maid, who as an emissary of nature cannot accept the ideologized reality, and those (the rulers) who "sing praises to red fascism"

## War and Post-war Menhirst

The last scene of B&W's *Doctissimo* (February 1945)

subtitled 'with some help from Fellini and bad dreams' and performed in the Pula shelter, recapitulates the scene on the Colosse stairs in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. In the film, the wounded woman, falling, pushes the baby carriage down the stairs; in the performance, the last scene of the orchestra rehearsal is a puppet-like (drift) entrance of the male figure and a woman with a baby carriage; the family as a small scale state. But the family trinity is incomplete, there is no baby figure in the carriage. The woman fills it with white death-masks, masks with no individuality, and the carriage is pushed away from the instrumentalised parents. The masks rebel against their makers. A figure dressed in a camouflage uniform, having produced the alarm call of the air raid, points the spectators strategically towards the location on which an orchestra rehearsal is to take place. He takes off his camouflage and puts it on some white linen, an act recalling the collective memory image of the blood stained uniform of a Croatian soldier used in the Benetton advertising campaign (concept and photo by Oliviero Toscani)<sup>11</sup>, framed by the protective Benetton logo (United Colours of Benetton; ironically inappropriate in our mutilated socio-existential united/federal situation) and the statement of the dead soldier's father: 'I, Gorko Gavrilo, the father of

<sup>10</sup>Marko Jureković, *Stara Zagreb i njegova okolina: u prirodojstvenom razmatranju* (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 1999), s. 143.

[illegible]

11. J. J. Stankovic, "Stankovic's Solution," *Science*, 1974, p. 14.

the killed Marinka Gagro, born 1963 in Blatnica, Čitluk, agree that my dead son's name be used on a poster as a means of fight for peace." The conductor is a "Mephisto in camouflage," who will take over the main role in the group scene of conducting/performing the fates of the orchestras of nations, trying to create a harmonious rhythm of action in war. War is the decision/will of the individual and the others (the orchestra) are instrumentalised by the war. The war orchestra heeds the call of the belligerent Mephisto. Rising takes the camouflage off, he is dressed in a black tie. From a dispirited war time into the bourgeois world. He is changing clothes like theatre costumes, according to his opposition. A black vampire bat/cage wraps/covers the future orchestra: this application of zoomorphism marks the first stage of curbing egalitarianism. The orchestra as a collective emotional corpse inscribes its destinies in Mephisto's cape. When the orchestra starts to follow Mephisto's dissentant conducting, orchestration and instrumentalisation, white death masks appear. It is an act of forming the social, organised body, absorbing individual bodies into its collectivism. Discipline does not count on the crowd, but on the fire power of the anchored individuals.<sup>12</sup> Each individual defiance of the instrumentalisation of the ego, every individual's disobedience of the totality of the established orchestra/people playing invisible instruments (they themselves are the instruments), is by means of a surveillance system subject to punishment. The war and post-war Mephisto restores the totalitarian normality by

means of a surveillance structure of voices breathing (the rhythm of breathing – the rhythm of thought). The preparation for equating thoughts with propaganda is secreted through the rhythm of their breathing, the rhythm of their body: from sitting upright to playing in tune. Together, the orchestra attempts a return into individuality through speaking their own names and years of age, but every attempt at self-interpretation is curtailed in the aphasic apatry. Ideology has channelled its thought, individuality has been automatised. Ideology is the inscribed, tattooed, codified harmony of thought. When the orchestra finds a possible pleasure in the intoned harmony of instrumentalism, the orchestral cabaret-march is created. Bow strings and instruments metamorphose functionally into guns: shouldered arms. "The body is organised as a part of the multisegmented machine." (Foucault, op. cit., p. 168.) A stage polymorph like that of the cabaret-military march in Bob Fosse's film *Cabaret* (1973).

While Fellini's orchestra (1978) has a rehearsal in a mediaeval crypt, INAT's orchestra chooses a shelter, where the orientation of the security ideology is magically strong. Fellini's parable on the origins of totalitarian regimes has been organised by INAT into a parable on the origins of national totalitarianism, in which a friend becomes a "friend in ideology."<sup>13</sup> The conductor as a politician in power epitomises the climax of the instrumentation of mass psychology of totalitarianism. The acting orchestra becomes the instrumentation of hell. Hell is one, like the origin of evil is One. The Criminal

<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline i kontrola: napisi o kaznovanju*, Zagreb: Informator, Fabrikat političkih misli, 1994, p. 238.

<sup>13</sup> For the "friend in ideology" see Ulrich Beitzel, *Stranci: napisi o migracijama*, Beograd, 93. rok, 1998, p. 300.



(Leader) is one. Politics *REALLY* is not a result of our (those committed to the alternative political utopia) decisions. The idea of the western political hell, as a totalitarian theatre of power, has been ranked, camouflaged metonymically by the aura of the political ties on high.

## Cicadas, red masks and baby carriages

Dr. INAT states that the choreo-drama *And the Cicadas Fell Silent* is in a certain way a continuation of the *Orchestra Behavioral*, which questions "the sense of continuing the race (and) breeding new life which automatically assumes the inherited masks of lies, hypocrisy and evil, accepting passively the shackles of the past and eternal silence." The accompanying booklet further states that the performance speaks of "modern young people, the Cicadas of the world, who have given up the fight and hope." Recalling Plato's linking philosophers with the cicadas in *Phaedrus* and connecting this metaphor with the title of INAT's choreo-drama, the pages of *History's* cynicism spread open, where the whirlpool of voices of alternative thinkers is *fushed*, silenced. This work is centred on the image of mothers with baby carriages as an image of the birth rate wished for by the narcissistic state. After looking into the carriages, the mothers drift away in horror from the reflection of the womb protecting the children's faces. Recall the debunking of conspiracy theory in Tom

Goetzac's oral interpretation: "Beneath the big conspiracy theory there are small conspiracy theories and the tiny conspiracy theories until you reach the family. In the same way, parents fool their children to make them capable of fooling other people."<sup>14</sup> Children's faces will bear the mask of their parents' past, the moulded, anchored mask of the mass painted in the colors of ideology in power. One can only go into the future not fearing the prints of the present in a new life without the baby carriages. After a long look into the womb, the mothers bring out sticky, sodden, poppy red masks. Patting them on the back of their heads they gain a polyccephalous gaze, the human present face and the red mask of the past at the back of the head. The past carries over into the present burdened by its passions and shapes the future. These are not Janus' gates of active passage from the past into the present, it is the grafting of legendary long-suffering past/history of Great Men on the present. "Ideologies are a byproduct and a vulgar expression of messianic utopian visions."<sup>15</sup> When the mask is put on the back of the head, the mothers bleed at the mouth. The doubling of the mask brings forth the mask's bloody word. After the giving birth scene, red masks are posted on the faces of mothers as visual metaphors for flayed torn flesh. After the surface tattoo, ideology uses cauterisation and scarification of anchored thought. The mothers' last gesture is pulling out the chords (read: metal umbilical cords), which forever tie them to (read) make them responsible for the fate of children. Cutting the ties with the entorional beginnings of human history or an alternative history of projective

1401. Susan Ruggard: "Relevance, present," *Postscript* 8 (2000), p. 13.

15141. Gertjan Toes: *Is a comedy of the mind*, Dagbladet Garmen, 2000, p. 187.

future - defined by actual enemies, opposing the psychohistory of eternal war cries of (human) race - are for the time being impossible. And the clocks fell silent: their night silence (passion) embraces also daily action.

## Rats come out

In *Pink Dreams*, performed at this year's PUF, Dr. INAT presents the figure of the domineering blind guide (Šandor Szekő), accompanied by a dog for the blind as his prosthetic arm/eye, as the figure of a guide through mundus subterraneus of the former military barracks. Entering from the playground, they fill the subterranean space with sadness and the dead life of a disconsolate ghost. In the wake of site-specific theatre, Dr. INAT imagines the life of exiles and refugees ungratefully grafted into the history of the former barracks. According to Branko Šušak: 'The barracks have their history of changing masters: they were built by the Austro-Hungarian imperial army, to be replaced by the Italian army, to be ousted by the Yugoslav army, and finally the refugees were placed here as the traces of this war. We entered the barracks after the refugees had left. They were being relocated somewhere else. You can see they were desperate. I found a room where the baby cot was unmade as if the child has just left, scattered toys, dishes, underwear... On top of that, there was a number of rat holes, for when they left, the rats came here. The barracks imposed its own theme and rhythm to the intimate understanding of the world. Masters changed, armies changed, and the institution remained as a symbol of those in power.' (Zvez 34, 20th July, 2000, p. 34.) Each room in the barracks, where the former cynical powers have inscribed their history, assumes the function of a station in the symbolism of Hell and Purgatory. The spectators walk through visual metaphors of the evil

consequences of life in exile, always defined by spaces of rejection. The politics of pain did not bring any political sense. The first installation of pain within the psychogeography of the barracks represents a bird in a cage, accompanied by the paradoxical cheerful bird song offstage. Then follows the first station with the suicidal act of a woman hanging herself having stripped herself. The second station offers the view of the room in which uniformed parents lie in beds, get up and go to the military metal white beds opposite. In the military beds there are baby dolls. The uniformed parents shake vigorously the little bodies of children, instead of rocking them to sleep. Do refugee children in exile dream of hard coats of childhood and of the sick minds of leadership, which have inscribed their childhood into the barracks of masculine beligerent smells? The central motif of INAT's non-verbal dramaturgy, performatively inscribed in the backdrop music, are the baby carriages, baby cots symbolising the inside of a warm, soft world. Cradle is connected to 'travel, and this (...) often has the shape of a boat: the uterus sailing or flying and protecting while passing through the world.'<sup>16</sup> In the funeral patrol of comic stations where the painterly imprint of Bojan Šušanj's black period is visible, there follows a series of installations of pain: two figures throw metal planes, creating metal-piercing and earth-thudding sound, while in front of this noisy agony a speechless scene of mourning takes place: a woman in bed with a skeleton; the bed as an icy-cold tomb in a room with footsteps offstage; the sink as a toilet seat, the dishes as excrement in a wasteland where the mouth and the anus are interchangeable. The leading motif of bed as tomb symbolises the wasteland of burnt, scorched destinies. The patrol through the barracks of the history of power ends in a inner yard, when the ghosts, Foucault's Cabaret evergreen Tominov Balanga to life in the backdrop, are trying to put the ghosts of former political

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Claude Milly, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of the Body*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1987, p. 347.



Opening of PAK Festival, 1990

'tomb' on the 'old' corpses-dolls as a symbol of a utopian change. Or, in the words of Branko Selac, emphasising the symbolism of funeral shoes that can be worn only by cleansed souls: 'Shoe symbolises the voyager. A Virgil walking through the world. All of us, waking, walking and disappearing. We are trying to put the shoes on these drowned rats to move on.' (Zarez 94, 20th July 2000, p. 34.) The final framing scene is presented as the shutting of the gates after the prophetic blind-guide has passed through them, his passage through the gates indicates that from behind the promised pink dreams erupts the black reality of political deadness with the coming shadows of the past and the destroyed landscapes/fetters of the living.

## Towards the end: the subcult theatre

The first FAK (Festival of Alternative Theatre Expression) took place in 1990 and like Branko Selac's PUF it proclaims the initiative to act and states (in the first person) in its manifesto what was available to them in the context of SKAZ: 'a rather conservative understanding of the theatre and with accompanying non-artistic features of the programme.' Though they have performed on various Croatian festivals, including Eurokar, they still 'lack (...) either a sensible (if not subversive) theatre expression or the ADA diploma.'<sup>17</sup> The fourth PUF (1998) included performances by Labirint Express and the Autonomous Culture Factory (ATTACK), the latter comprising some companies of the First FAK. The fans will undoubtedly remember the exterior live installation *Fest*, performed by the performance art group *No Package* and lasting eight hours, an allusion to the eight-hour working hours. The location, near the tree in front of the hotel Dubrovnik, included a black man-doll in a yellow net, indicating a stage story of the holistic unity of tree and Man, networked into his own apocalyptic fate, prophetically

defined in Eliot's 'rat alley' (*The Waste Land*). The Schenitz theatre action 22% was aimed against the state imposed tax on books and intended to provoke by stealing the Knowledge inaccessible on the market, in the Algorithm bookstore. However, a more subversive expanding of the truth about this tax was given triumphantly by Filip Bifeš, one of the unfamed members of the non-conformist performance group *The United Balkans Inc.*, who refused to be a member of the tamed and egalitarian herd of illiterate idiots.

One year after the first FAK, the group PRONI from Osijek organised, in collaboration with ATTACK, the Festival of Young Alternative Artists Plug-in 01 (11-14 November 1993), begun by the 'brains alert.' The festival opened in the early morning hours by installing 89 rental flags with the inscription 'mines' in the Petar Preradović promenade in Osijek. The police was informed mines were planted in the area and the police squads arrived, prompted especially by the information that 'there is a bomb in the apartment of the governor of Slavonija, Branimir Čašćić' (*Večernji list* 12 XI 1999, p. 18). We are thus back at the beginning of our story of the Croatian alternative theatre of the weary skeletons.  
(Translated by Tomislav Brlek and Iva Čaraki)

**Bozenna Marjaniti is a theorist.**

<sup>17</sup>Čašćić, *Večernji list* 1999a: 17-18, 22, 1999b.



A stylized, high-contrast black and white graphic. On the right, a silhouette of a person is shown in a running or jumping pose, moving from right to left. In the center, there is a fence made of vertical posts and horizontal rails. A large, solid black arrow points from the right towards the fence. Another large, solid black arrow points from the left towards the fence, positioned below the first one. The background is a light gray with a large, dark gray triangular shape on the left side.

**alternatives**

**80s**

# alter

written by  
dejan krđić /arkisla/

To begin with we ought to put ourselves some basic questions: what is "alternative" in nowadays media, in art and politics? Is there any reason for using the term "alternative culture" beside the historical one? It seems in fact that in the Western theoretic literature the very notion "alternative culture" is actually rare. One mostly talks about mass culture, popular culture, counterculture, subculture, subordinate culture, common culture, folk culture, while the alter... is not found anywhere. It is a notion usually linked to the pop music scene. Coming from pop-publications, a notion that for us in the former East (which we in ex/post-Yugoslavia are gradually becoming part of as we keep 'approaching to the West') used to be of much greater importance than to people in the West.

Although it is a relational notion that might theoretically be of a general use (since there always exists something as an alternative to something else), in case of avant-garde it is really a child of its own time - 50, '60, '70ies. Such a wide range is determined by its slow spreading - from figurative arts, over the theatre and film up to pop music.

The notion of 'alternative' i.e. or 'the alternative' in cultural production is connected with the terms 'avant-garde' and 'counterculture' as a style or a historical guideline of a given time period, 'avant-garde' and 'counterculture' as style or 'subculture' as that different ('progressive', 'advanced', 'radical'), what is moving the boundaries, getting out of the mainstream, or rather opposing the establishment, the traditional high level, elite culture.

Linked to the political hang of the second half of the '60s and '70s, the idea of the so-called 'alternative media' has been developed - an independent film production, private radio stations, fanzines, small independent editors, do-it-yourself production connected to the appearance of new media, serigraphy, audio cassettes, video,

photocopying, posterad... in an opposition to the conventional cultural establishment, the steady norms of media industry, while the passionate engagement of amateurs (literally 'admirers') are opposing the dry urban or professional work.

## "Vanishing mediators"

In its historic period ('70s-'80s), alternative culture or alternative cultural movement/s acted against the existing institutions (not least outside them), and in the Yugoslav/East European context that sort of self-organisation and activity has appeared as politically coloured, but not in the way it is sometimes thought of nowadays as "a light against the darkness of communist totalitarianism", almost paradoxically in a state whose official ideology used to be "self-management" - as a struggle for a complete self-realisation of each individual and culture, against bureaucratic limitations. While the counterculture movement of the late sixties and the early seventies in the West expected the liberalisation of the standpoint towards drugs and sexuality in culture to bring about a change in politics, and shared the destiny of new social movements being lost in postmodern art like a stream within the sand, the extremely politicised alternative cultural movements of the twenties and the eighties in the East have disappeared at the very moment of their alleged triumph - by introducing the parliamentary democracy, i.e. by the 'return of capitalism'. In the East and the West the problem appears when culture and ourselves as its creators and consumers become aware of our 'post-modern' state, a situation where economy starts overlapping with culture in which everything, including even the production of goods, becomes cultural, while to the same extent culture becomes economical, oriented towards the goods production...



## "Living in a Disco"

At the beginning of new wave period in pop music, that loss of cultural autonomy is best expressed by the piece "Pop Music", a hit of the anonymous group M in 1979, which on the synthetic basis by means of a monotone technocratic voice exposes the key problems: " New York, London, Paris, Munich, everybody talks about pop music" - the global omnipresence of new disco dance, but at the same time also a debate of non-personal, anonymous centres of interest; "boogie with a suitcase" - the movement of information, culture into the midst of what up to yesterday was called production forces; "we are living in a disco, forget about the rat race" - bringing rhythm into life, the loss of sacred cultural status, its integration into everyday life, a feeling of the impossibility of an escape from the strictly given space.

As the pop critic of "Polet", Tomislav Ilirius puts it: The high position of that song on the list of best singles in 1979 is the then central subject of taste determining, the NME and the stylistic and thematic correspondence in pieces of "established" groups, are legitimising "Pop music" as a significant expression of issues of the new wave. It is indicative that precisely a group belonging to the anonymous world of pop music top lists, and not the individualist world of author rock music, was the first to feel the new situation in which pop music had found itself. A moment of truth took place in an instant song of a group doomed to being forgotten, and not to being remembered in rock history or a rock encyclopedia. Besides it is a disco piece of music.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, if in pop music "the alternative" used to be formally determined as a counterpart of a type of music versus another type of music (e.g. punk vs. synthic rock); and later, with the new wave, structurally - which has all been published by the independent (the so called "indie") companies like Factory with Joy Division/New Order, Rough Trade with The Smiths, Mute with Depeche Mode,

4 A.O. with The Cocteau Twins....no matter what type of sound and commercial success is the alternative to what is being published by big corporations like EMI, RCA, CBS.... Towards the end of the 80s "the alternative" remains a matter of pure capitalist competition within the free enterprising system. Thus even in pop music which as Bowie put it ("When in doubt, blame Bowie...") was always ten years late in comparison to the other artistic areas, 'definitely' there has been a breakdown of the extremely modernist ideology. Every ideological charge of the "alternative" of any kind has been whitened. The notion 'indie' has in that way definitely become an introduction to industry and not an element of difference. Really, we are living in a disco, and the 80s have precisely confirmed it on the market: by the expansion of techno/house scene, by their all night rave parties, mass happenings like Love Parade, music that emphasises rhythm and prevalence in which the boundaries of a particular song in a mix are disappearing, and the original version itself is being replaced by a remix series.

## XXXXX

The notion of the alternative/alternative has thus been destroyed from two sides: the contemporary media/culture industry is swallowing even the most radical artistic expressions without a single problem (body art, pornography, SM, body cutting, plastic operations....) as in case of Body radicals - Orlan, Stelarc, Ron Athey, Franko B, Annie Sprinkle....) colonising the "alternative", which is on the other hand becoming part of the mainstream. Those who have so far been on the margins have become stars and the whole so called alternative, independent or marginal production/scene is acting according to the same principles as the dominant cultural industry, with its institutions, stars, needs, mechanisms of promotion.... While the classic modernistic art was opposing society, challenging, critical, acting negatively,



frequently is a subversive or at least in the manner of an opposition even in cases it was aesthetic to the utmost, it was always striving to something above the pure aesthetics; the question is whether such a thing could be said about the contemporary production. The production of goods, marketing, consuming, commercial success - comprise everything, from ethnic music up to marginal sexual practice. Whether in form or its contents, there is very little in contemporary art that the modern late capitalist society could think of as unacceptable, unbearable, offending, or scandalous... Each particular form, style, or sort of expression is understood only as goods meant for a group with a certain aim.

The critics would add that in a practical sense the notion of 'the alternative/alternative culture' has not only been surpassed and unnecessary, but also that the notion itself is ready to be put away into the remnants of history because it insists on dualism where a diversity is needed. The illusion of non-antagonistic - Society presents a global "container" in which there is room enough for the whole range of cultural communities, styles of life, religions, sex directions. But within the variations of life styles, in the glorified tolerance (cultural, ethnic, religious, sexual...) of diversity, in the multicultural ideology, is there not a hidden danger of an One, dominant, of something that is out of question, and that is a global and omnipresent logic of capital. Is the very Oneness, the common field within which all sorts of identities are growing, not already supported by certain exclusions, is it not leaving on a certain invisible, negated, antagonistic breach. Isn't this "diversity" in itself - starting with the so called ethnic kitchens that are disposable to the consumer in a contemporary city up to the illusion of the governing liberal dose about specific identity market on which any subject can freely and with full consciousness choose among a number of subjective positions/roles, that one can freely choose and continuously change - isn't it only

the other side of a general global unification where the political freedoms are substituted by free market, and the individual freedom, freedom of man and citizen is put to a common denominator of taking his choice between two competitive market signs - Coke or Pepsi? In case we want the alternative notion to keep any sense at all in this society of spectacular globalisation, when all styles are permitted, or if we want it to acquire some new meaning and be productive, we have to understand it in a deeply political way, not connect it to the traditional issues of aesthetics but to the basic social antagonisms. Culture/cultural production can nowadays be an alternative not by its new, different, unusual form or expression manner...but also exclusively in a political way. The alternative cannot be defined by means of a series of specific excellencies of contents or form, i.e. those qualities are not in themselves "alternative", but they have become such by their specific articulation into a definite - radical - politically/ideological project. This is culture/art that does not consider the existing relation of domination and power as steady, petrified and unchangeable, as something that could not be influenced. In spite of the post-modern theory of love towards trash aesthetics, the so called trivial literature, the world of B-movies, Las Vegas, pornography and radical sexuality... not even a short while ago despised and nowadays a completely integrated world of popular mass culture is not in itself "subversive" or "emancipated", it is such only when it questions its own position by a conscious political viewpoint, when it enters its own political engagement while summing up the situation as a whole. Is itself a definite type, a sort or form of production does not necessarily guarantee an alternative position (e.g. street theatre versus institution; performances or installations opposing gallery exhibits of paintings...) therefore in a paradoxical way, the alternative can these days appear even at most unexpected places - within the heart of elite culture, in the academic world, or just as





well in most massive popular culture, in Hollywood or within the talk of world corporations. Neither the genre nor the formal style as such can warrant anything any more.

The alternative that is not only a matter of critical definition or a market-marketing definition, should be a matter of self-consciousness, of a deliberate decision for a definite position, for one political standpoint... a viewpoint that in the leftist tradition could be called emancipating.

In case of a spectacular, incessant discourse of a governing system about itself, not a collection of paintings but a social relation, we can say that at present: the alternative/everything alternative is an incessant discourse of sublated classes about the governmental system and their own position within it.

The alternative is not a style, an issue of form, or expression, but an active questioning, the reconsideration of the existing social relations.

In Croatia, as in the rest of Eastern Europe, such traumatic areas are abundant, they are the issues of relation of the major nation and the minorities, of language, of relations toward political/ideological past and tradition in general, the role of the church, of ideological repression, of the control or rather the influence of media, the economical and legal problems of privatisation and denationalisation, socio-political problems of relations among political parties, the role of the parliament, civil society, problems of planning and projection of the future, economic and social development, joining the so-called European integration, facing the globalisation process ... But the political approach must not be understood in a narrow sense of the word as (a desirable and even necessary) engagement in daily politics – exactly as we are reminded by Frederic Jameson, that in the engaged, politicised, alternative production of the '60s/'70s, the

innovations in art, and even more so in the theatre, in case of the most aesthetic and the least politically aware actors and directors, have always been initialised by a firm conviction that a theatre performance is a symbolic gesture of an aesthetic protest but also some sort of praxis, and that changes in the theatre, as minor as they may be, also contribute to the general change of life itself, of the world which the theatre is as well part of as its mirror, a means of its intellectual reflection, in the world in which it is much easier to imagine its end, the ecological catastrophe than an end of the capitalist production forces, where the old opposition left/right tends to be presented as irrelevant and philosophical ideas like "the end of history" become relevant and support the unchangeable social relations, when the political freedom is substituted by free market, the only alternative is the political one, the acceptance of the antagonism of social relations and one's own responsibility for the present and the future development. And the real alternative to the global is not anti-global, the closing within the frame of a nation-state, it is not preserving the illusion of some authentic (national, ethnic...) identity, but another definition of the global in itself, of emancipation and solidarity.

In that case, alternative culture must not be understood as a certain state and a static style but as an active struggle and political strategy. Today perhaps more than ever before, the words of Walter Benjamin have become true, saying that the aestheticism of politics has to be confronted with a powerful politics of the aesthetic.

(Translated by Mioda Karlovic - Blazekovic)

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# a notebook\*

[an outline of a report for the project cultural policy of the republic of croatia, 2000-2004]

## Vjeron Zappa, 1999

\* The simple title of this text: A Notebook, was taken over from the French political practice, in which Cahiers have, since the 16th century, contained political reports or objections to certain legal or political actions. The text emerged out of no other ambition than to encourage a public debate, to which none of the political parties have so far dedicated a single word in their electoral programs.

In order to materialize the transition from the current status into a newly decided one, let us decide that every reform should, as much as possible, stem from ideas and human minds.

W. von Humboldt, Ideas for an Attempt to Delineate the Limits of Efficiency of the State

### 1. CULTURAL POLICY: AN OUTLINE

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### II. CROATIAN CULTURAL POLICY 1991-1999, AN OUTLINE

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# 1. AIMS OF THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA 1990-2004, AN OUTLINE

## 1. GENESIS OF CULTURAL POLICIES

1.1. Formation of cultural policies and issuance of documents on these is of a more recent date in the European political practice.

1.2. In France, for example, a more intensive definition of the state interest in overall 'cultural property', and above all in the cultural heritage could not be found until Malraux's decree<sup>1</sup>, dated 1959, which provided the action of 'dispositif', 'distribution', and even 'decentralization' of culture. The primary aim of that action is the geographical and social 'presentation' of national cultural values, as broadly as possible.

1.3. In the Netherlands - a country which experts consider to be the most advanced of European countries in the area of cultural planning and strategies of evaluation of the cultural sector - the situation as regards culture was not encouraging as recently as 1970. The political system demanded to 'have its voice heard in that area', so it is considered that cultural initiatives were often launched and explained from a 'political point of view'. The Government report entitled *Art and Cultural Policy from 1976* was the first document relevant to the Dutch cultural policy, and is closely linked with its European success.

1.4. On April 16, 1993 the Law on Cultural Policy, came into force in the Netherlands, as the first and only law specialists of that kind in Europe, formulated on the supposition of 'the necessary legislation' of the entire corpus belonging to this separate sphere.

## 2. MANNERS OF INCUBATION

2.1. Cultural policies of the developed countries have, in general, been incubated far earlier than they have been articulated. Also, they were incubated in widely different ways.

2.2. In Sweden, for example, the manner of incubation was the result of a severe cultural debate of many years, which started in 1960. At first, The Film Institute, drama schools, The Theatre and Music Council and The Swedish National Travelling Theatre took part in the discussion about national culture, to be followed by other institutions, groups and individuals, who all judged the policy as 'inadequate' and 'random'. In 1974, this long debate resulted in a report to the Parliament, which then defined eight basic principles of the Swedish cultural policy.

2.3. In Austria, a country with a federalist structure of its own, the manner of incubation was completely different. The Government statement from 1990 about the need to 'take every possible action on behalf of democratization of society and 'strengthening of co-operation' between provinces, local government and central government based on federalism principles marks the foundation of the Austrian cultural policy. Primarily, it is 'the continuation of the social policy' (F. Seiwald).

## 3. STAGING

3.1. A cultural policy is, first of all, one of the policies - clustered

together with economic, social and health policies etc. - of the political party or the party coalition which is in power during a certain electoral period. Therefore, the development of most European cultural policies comes in stages.

3.2. A stage is most frequently marked by the basic political principle of the party which forms the cultural policy, and it is rarely named after the person who has influenced its creation.

3.3. The French cultural policy could thus be divided into The Malraux policy (1959-1969), the post-Malraux policy (1969-1981), the policy of socialist orientation (1981-1986), the policy of liberal orientation (1986-1988) and so forth.

3.4. The Austrian cultural policy could be divided into the cultural policy of the socialists (1970-1983), the cultural policy of 'the small coalition' (1983-1986), the cultural policy of 'the large coalition' etc. These coalitions, however, are characterised by a constant confrontation between 'humanist' and 'populist' concepts, as well as between competing models of 'partnership' and 'participation' cultural policies.

3.5. It would be difficult to determine the stages of the Dutch cultural policy. It is a successful creation of the Dutch coalition political practice of many years, as well as of the consensus principle that was strictly implemented in all issues raised in this area.

## 4. IMPERATIVES

4.1. Every cultural policy has its traditional foundations (art institutions of long standing or of national importance) and classic areas (for example, protection of historically significant monuments, archive materials, environment protection, functioning of museums and libraries and so on), which make the so-called systematic support obligatory.

4.2. European cultural policies are therefore articulated by two imperatives, which are often contradictory. They are not only tied to the state by the budget, but also in cultural and historical sense i.e. by the debt imperative to both structural and traditional givens. They are tied to the official politics during the ruling's party term of office by the project imperative.

4.3. Most often, such a project can 'intervene' into the givens, or can even activate solutions the goal of which is a more powerful dynamics and higher flexibility of the entire cultural sphere.

4.4. Only one European project: the Dutch project of cultural expansion - contrary to, for example, the French project of 'decentralization' or the Austrian project of 'democratization' of culture - has been realized independently from European political coalitions and staged 'programming' of cultural projects, and is the only project that is markedly developmental and continuous.

## 5. PROJECT CONDITION ONE

5.1. The principle of efficiency of the state is a project condition of all its policies, including the cultural one.

5.2. Cultural policies are usually preceded by 'the necessary steps' which the state takes in order to eliminate the obstacles to system efficiency, which are 'encountered' in the sphere of culture. They are also preceded by various - formal and informal - 'moves' resulting from the steps already taken and those opposite to them. Thus, a cultural policy is not consumed by subtle processes of administrative formalizations of distribution



France), stable system of allocation of budgetary means (Great Britain, nor by the standard methodology of 'cultural development': a 'planning' that takes into consideration the bad sides of the good and the good sides of the bad).

**5.3.** Cultural policies emerge with the aim of providing complex answers to the encountered or hindered dynamics of relations and forms of participation of the state and society in the 'price' of culture.

**5.4.** The wider and more diverse the participation in the 'price' of culture is, the freer from the state influence and 'interference' culture is, but at the same time, it requires a special system of evaluation more. Construction of such systems is exceptionally sensitive for the policy, because culture becomes even more active and sensitive to politics through such processes.

**5.5.** Through the demand for a special system of evaluation of culture and its products, cultural policy provokes politics by a goal beyond or outside of it, for which politics must find inner resources.

**5.6.** Funds from the central, regional and municipal government budgets are included into the 'price' of culture in the case of the European countries which are democratically developed. Their proportions of these funds vary to a great extent from country to country. This price also includes other types of funding: patronage of the arts, private funds and initiatives, tax on cultural industry products (i.e. audio-visual), sponsorships encouraged by tax deductions etc.

**5.7.** Proportions of funds allocated from the budget in, for example, Great Britain in 1988 were as follows: 33 % from the central budget, 0 % from the regional and 67 % from the municipal budgets. In Switzerland: 13 % from the central, 34 % from the cantonal and 53 % from the municipal budgets. In Italy: 32 % from the central, 11 % from the regional and 37 % from the municipal budgets. In Sweden: 43 % from the central, 7 % from the provincial and 50 % from the municipal budgets.

## **6. PROJECT CONDITION, TWO**

**6.1.** Political belief in cultural values, its effects and range of its effects influences articulation of cultural policies all around Europe.

**6.2.** A high level of that belief is an important condition for the creation of a cultural policy 'worthy of its name'. (I. Chiosso).

**6.3.** A low level of such a belief keeps culture - a frequent scene of the state pride and political promises - within reach of 'national solutions', or in other words purely 'planned' politics, often practised by ruling parties, especially in the early European political practice.

**6.4.** Co-operation between president De Gaulle and minister Malraux is the most modern case of 'the new intimacy between culture and politics' since 1945 (J. Habermas), and it was undoubtedly an important project condition for the Malraux cultural strategy.

**6.5.** Swedish cultural policy documents from 1974 and 1994 provide evidence that the development of political belief is a condition for the autonomous growth of a cultural policy. In 1974, one of the goals of the Swedish cultural policy was to 'contain the negative impact of commercialisation'. The same goal was elaborated by the solution reached by Parliament in 1994: 'promotion of cultural pluralism, artistic education and values, and through that the action against negative effects of commercialisation'.

**6.6.** A Swedish parliamentary document from 1996 expresses the view that optimisation of the sphere of cultural values is a sufficient

prerequisite of its efficiency, even when confronted with the destructive forces of the market and marketability. The Swedish policy has, during the last few decades, not only increased the level of their belief in cultural values, but has become a model of politics with a cultural belief.

## **7. PROJECT CONDITION, THREE**

**7.1.** Existence of an anti-project, i.e. anti-projects, has proved to be an important project condition in the articulation of cultural policy itself throughout the European practice.

**7.2.** Parties or party coalitions usually suggest anti-projects, which are seldom suggested by cultural institutions and formal or informal groups of artists and other cultural workers.

**7.3.** In general, anti-projects have a counter-offensive effect, putting pressure on the political sphere as such by demanding responsibility for culture.

**7.4.** Anti-projects are important not only because they suggest new solutions, but also because they lift the old or constant priorities in culture. The result of the confrontation of projects and anti-projects regularly pinpoints certain points of agreement as regards cultural institutions or areas, or activities of national importance. At the same time, it expresses considerable differences concerning the 'necessary steps' that have to be taken regarding organization, financing, evaluation, i.e. functioning of the cultural sector.

**7.5.** Short of anti-projects, the scope of the cultural will of members of a state community cannot even be outlined.

**7.6.** The period between 1981 and 1986 was important for the formation of the French cultural policy. The platform for common behaviour prepared by two moderate parties (RPR and UDF) contained some chapters on culture and area of communications.

The anti-project outlined there obliged the state at four points only: functioning of large institutions with the guarantee of their autonomy, providing scientific and technical support to decentralised collectivity and all partners in cultural life, ensuring artistic instruction on higher levels and managing cultural actions abroad. This anti-project primarily offers everything else, including patronage - otherwise developed through 'a simple mechanism of fiscal relief' - a principle of 'social responsibility', and favours practices that use such a responsibility or put it to a test.

**7.7.** Anti-projects undoubtedly strengthen the competitiveness of cultural-political models, and exclude the possibility of the winning ones.

## **8. ELEMENTS, AREAS AND INSTRUMENTS**

**8.1.** Instruments of cultural policies in Europe are exceptionally different. They differ because they stem from various incubation forms, numerous specific qualities of the development process, and from special interpretations of project conditions of cultural policies (community efficiency, political trust, competitiveness of models).

**8.2.** Instruments of the cultural policy which constantly generate new ideas but do not generate conspicuous support structures (France), greatly differ from those of the cultural policy which generates few ideas, but has a stronger will in regards initiating structures which are beyond the reach of state administration, and with a 'better overview' of all that belongs to culture (Ireland).

and the cultural policy which is fully formed on quite a simple precept: 'cultural policy is dynamic, as art itself' (De Nederlands).

**3.3.** Instruments of cultural policies in Europe differ in regards to budgetary, cultural and historical, as well as innovative imperatives.

Although they are often discarded, those imperatives – quite accordingly – repeat the same thing from every cultural policy: innovative instruments. In search of those, European cultural policies constantly multiply their instruments, but their results appear slowly and disappear fast.

**3.4.** Malraux's 'houses of culture' had, for example, been the innovative instrument of the 'decentralization' of the French culture in the 1960s, but ten years later they were written off and dismissed as a weak and in principle a symbolic result of a 'naïve' strategy of democratization (P. Barthes).

**3.5.** The catalogue of articulating elements and formative areas of cultural policies is an extensive one. As opposed to instruments, most of these elements and areas are easily indicated:

- Forms of state government and self-government
- Economic power of the country
- Position and structure of ministries
- Basic cultural institutions
- Heritage
- Institutions of art and professional education
- Cultural legislation
- Contemporary artistic creation and activity
- Publishing
- Libraries
- Museums and galleries
- Theatre
- Film
- Media
- The Net culture
- Ecological culture
- Culture of construction and urban planning
- Design and applied arts culture
- Amateur culture
- Culture of minorities
- Non-governmental associations and institutions
- Projects, actions, initiatives
- Institutions for research and taking of cultures
- Cultural industry
- Patronage, sponsorship, sponsorship etc.

**3.6.** The content of the above mentioned, but also of all that was left out, is the only political material of culture. Today, in the contemporary world, it cannot do anything with that material without its 'kill which – according to the standard of the possible – knows what it wants and wants what it can'. (E. Reck)

## 9. BASIC OBLIGATION OF A CULTURAL POLICY

**9.1.** The first principle of the Swedish cultural policy from 1924 reads as follows: 'Ensuring the prerequisites for the freedom of expression', while the one from 1998 states: 'Maintain the freedom of expression and achieve genuine possibility for everyone to take advantage of that freedom'. Similarly, the first principle of the Dutch cultural policy is 'Freedom of expression'.

**9.2.** Although 'freedom of expression' is guaranteed by the constitutions of all democratic countries, cultural policies of the

countries of developed democracy stress the freedom of expression as their own most important aim.

**9.3.** Freedom guaranteed by the constitutions is not the same as 'the freedom of expression' as the target principle of cultural policies.

**9.4.** Freedom of creation is a constitutional right of citizens, while 'freedom of expression' is a principle through which a cultural policy takes over the obligation as regards measures for the 'full realization of that right'.

**9.5.** Freedom of expression is primarily a political, and not a political category. It is based on 'multiplicity of forms' of art, 'plurality' of culture and 'multiversum' of personality. Those are phenomena that politics – as such – can take on and accept only through a 'separate' politics able to protect, support, develop and evaluate them.

**9.6.** Freedom of expression is the basic obligation of a cultural policy, because no other can take it over, and only society can achieve it.

## 10. CONCLUSION

**10.1.** Cultural policies emerge as an answer to the development of the cultural area and to the fact that routine procedures and normal instruments of state administration can no longer meet their demands.

**10.2.** Cultural policies of the 'free world' countries were encouraged by a strong ideologization of art and culture in the socialist countries. Therefore, each of them represents a practical interpretation of their common principle that political power and its state administration should be kept 'at an arm's length'.

**10.3.** Cultural policies are anti-ideological in their origin, and in their continuation they develop as experimental practices of European policies, i.e. as an especially interactive skill needed for the formation of post-national states, and of modern and post-modern society.

**10.4.** Cultural policy is – so far the only one – licitly political of politics.

## 1. THE SITUATION OF CROATIAN CULTURE

**1.1.** It is a special problem ... that there is no document which would articulate both short-term and long-term aims of a cultural policy on the state level, but cultural policy is deduced from general premises of the legal and political system and dominantly accepted cultural values.<sup>1</sup>

This paragraph is quoted from the second chapter of the national report Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia, which was submitted to the Council of Europe on April 8, 1998, and which the European experts considered to be 'an exemplary document'.

**1.2.** A group of Croatian researchers consider that the Croatian cultural policy in the period between 1991 and 1998 could be 'traced back' to the general character and reawakening of the legislature, to palliative measures of the ruling political system and general statements about 'dominantly accepted' cultural values, but that is not entirely correct. Only a description of the cultural situation in Croatia could be derived from the above-mentioned, and consequently a conclusion could be made that during the mentioned period a certain political policy

replaced the Croatian cultural policy.

**3.3.** In the period between 1991 and 1999, culture in Croatia was protected by the Constitution, primarily through its principle of 'freedom of creation' (Article 68), and by several obsolete, special laws (12 of them, some dating from the old system) in the area of cultural legislation.

**3.4.** At the same time, values that have been thoroughly sifted through principles (obligation, loyalty) and activities (penetration, influence, unification) dominate culture in Croatia, a nation and state in the process of development.

**3.5.** Cultural situation in Croatia appears to be democratized through the advisory bodies consisting of artists and cultural workers which were established within the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and within municipal government institutions, but their advice about 'distribution of funds' are not binding at all.

**3.6.** The national report on Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia is actually the document about the present condition of Croatian culture and about political actions in the sphere of culture, which, however, does not contain any trace of any independent cultural policy.

## **2. THE OFFICIAL ESTIMATE OF 'THE CURRENT STAGE'**

**2.1.** The national report Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia is an official document submitted to the Council of Europe, and consequently its final estimate of the period 1991-1998 could be regarded as the official one, although it is not clear whether it was approved through blindness or summariness of the state administration.

**2.2.** 'The Croatian state cultural policy in the current stage selectively encourages and directs cultural contents suitable for the purpose of asserting national identity and domestic and international cohesion... Such a stage could be characterized as neoconservative.'

**2.3.** Selective encouragement of cultural contents suitable for asserting national identity and national cohesion is the key to all 'demonstrably accepted cultural values' which qualify Croatian culture 'in current conditions' as neoconservative.

**2.4.** Institutions and instruments of actual evaluation in culture, apart from their obligation to develop the nation, also encourage and monitor processes of assimilating the primitive and the traditional, the old-fashioned and the classical, the fashionable and the trendy, the representative and the valuable; the processes necessary for neo-nationalistic and neo-conservative forms of government.

**2.5.** The Croatian state did not give culture a 'concession' on the cultural policy project, primarily because its ultimate goal is always freedom from the state government control, or control on behalf of it. Short-term and long-term plans of European cultural policies were undoubtedly moulded in accordance with the same goal.

## **3. 'THE CROATIAN STATE CULTURAL POLICY'**

**3.1.** Between 1991 and 1999, the Croatian culture was brought into a situation which does not permit project conditions for the development of cultural policies, but which meets all prerequisites for the creation of the policy homologous with it: 'The Croatian state cultural policy'.

**3.2.** State politics trusts cultural values primarily seen as historical and other evidence of the work of 'a spirit favourably disposed' (W. von Humboldt) to the given nation, and the state is efficient only when its cultural programs serve expansion purposes.

**3.3.** Funds are distributed on the basis of the Law On Financing Public Needs in Culture (1993) and through proposing Programs of Public Needs for the current year, which are formulated by the Ministry of Culture as soliciting for tenders, and through an 'interplay of various interests in decision-making', the result of which are cultural programs which 'serve national interests'.

**3.4.** The formula 'serving national interests' is linked to the 'public needs model' as a 'corrective' criterion, but in the process of selection of programs that formula was used directly for clientele purposes, as an investment into persons holding the same political views, cultural subordinates and art issues congenial to the neo-conservative policies.

**3.5.** State budget allocations for culture never exceeded the limit of 1 % (0.85 % in 1997). Those allocations in general constitute one third of total allocations for culture in the Republic of Croatia. One third is allocated by the city of Zagreb, and one third by other municipal government and self-management authorities.

**3.6.** Exceptionally low budget allocations for culture are the result of thoroughly narrow trust the state puts in cultural activity and its 'positive effects', and ignorance of cultural workers and their institutions to the so-called basic budgetary needs of the state and main 'clients' of the nation in the state construction (the military, police, administration...)

**3.7.** Inherent in the concept of state budget and all too important in the concept of national priorities, 'The Croatian state cultural policy' is an ideological construct of a low-budgeted and highly calculated pressure exerted on Croatian culture in the period between 1991 and 1999.

## **4. INITIATION OF THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT**

**4.1.** The civil initiative A thousand signatures in 1994 was the first invitation to the Croatian government to make public the direction and concept of the Croatian cultural policy with respect to the following: a) the re-acquired conditions; b) the medium-term development goals. One thousand artists and cultural workers under the motto 'Croatia thinks through culture', and with the request: 'We need a cultural policy which comes from here!' voiced their need for a public debate about the cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia, demanding that 'the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia should be the scene of the final debate'. The only direct result of this civil initiative was the foundation of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia as a separate state administration unit.

**4.2.** National report Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia, formulated to justify the request made by the Council of Europe, cannot be avoided as a serious attempt to articulate a cultural policy, especially since this attempt was as a whole and in its project qualities segmented by the report made by European experts: *The Croatian Cultural Policy / From Obstacles to Bridges* (1998).

**4.3.** The report made by European experts about the Croatian national report is actually the first list of possible principles and

aims of the Croatian cultural policy.

**4.4.** The text under the title *What does Rome mean to Croatia?* was published in November, 1998. This declaration of Croatian independent publishers is an important document which shows, in a systematic way, that the practice of political intervention into culture should be stopped by a Croatian cultural project. Laws that have not yet been made – i.e. Law on Books, Law on Publishing – have to be an expression of such a project, or in other words, the 'expression of a cultural policy'.

**4.5.** Contents of all other initiatives (the most important among them being formulated in a public discussion on the occasion of enactment of the Law on Rights of Independent Artists and Encouragement of Artistic and Cultural Creation), with the aim of the articulation of a Croatian cultural policy, could be summed up as follows: Only a cultural interest responsible to a project in its entity can protect and develop cultural values, while certain political interests focused on its moment could never do that.

## **5. MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA: A MOVE AGAINST THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT**

**5.1.** Foundation of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia in 1994 was – although it seems to be quite the opposite – a completely pragmatic move of the ruling party directed against the articulation of a cultural policy and against any initiative which would demand that.

**5.2.** Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia was founded in order to be 'the authentic interpreter' of cultural needs, a state institution which offers the Croatian culture the so-called 'adequate solutions', or which, in other words, plans those solutions depending on the situation.

**5.3.** Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia is positioned as the main creator and organizer of the cultural situation, and functions as its main controlling body:

- it initiates and prepares laws in the area of culture
- participates in the budget preparations
- decides about the distribution of funds to state supplement beneficiaries
- controls operation of cultural institutions
- appoints principals of public institutions
- appoints managers of national theatres
- performs administrative and other professional tasks relating to the operation of institutions and other legal persons in culture, and on ensuring financial and other conditions for the operation of museums, galleries, theatres, music, stage, visual arts, film and publishing activity
- performs administrative and other professional tasks related to registration, documentation, research and preservation of heritage, protection of environment and landmarks

**5.4.** According to the scope of its authority, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia is actually the acting manager of the cultural policy in Croatia.

**5.5.** Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia is positioned in such a way that it is able 'to directly "satisfy the needs" of the state politics'. It can deal with the needs of artists and cultural workers in a completely pragmatic way 'considering the circumstances', especially since it does not have to achieve the

goals of the cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia that were determined, publicly discussed and voted for in the Parliament.

**5.6.** European cultural policies influence the position and scope of responsibility of ministries of culture, while the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, through its position and scope of responsibility, influences the lack of cultural policies in Croatia.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1.** The document which would articulate short-term and long-term aims of a cultural policy on the state level has to be made, so that its content could offer Croatian culture and cultures of minorities in the Republic of Croatia, or in other words, all the artists and cultural workers, their projects, actions and institutions, an efficient perspective, while at the same time determining the basic obligations of the state towards them.

**6.2.** The cultural policy project has to be made on the state level, not only so that the state community could know its short-term and long-term goals and obligations, but also so that it should, through that project, accept the basic principle of European cultural policies: the principle of co-interference of the state with the activities of cultural community. Moreover, so that it could – starting from that principle – constantly direct political willingness, necessary knowledge and financial means towards the realization of the structural support of the independence of 'the cultural sector' (professional independent bodies, separate funds, cultural legislation, system of tax benefits, etc.). In other words: 'freedom of creation', the constitutional right of citizens, should be subject to measures for the full realization of that right.

**6.3.** The cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia project has to be made with the intention of creation of a full autonomy of the process of operating, evaluating and decision-making in culture.

The cultural policy project has to be made so that the state politics would no longer act as a patron above the activities and values which do not belong to it, but that it could participate in cultural processes as a partner, at first from a necessary, and then from a larger 'distance'.

The cultural policy project has to be made so that the ideological creation of 'the Croatian state cultural policy' should be removed from the stage together with its powerful instruments:

political clientelism based on the narrow definition of the national interest (see the report made by European experts);

institutions of assimilation of prejudice and judgement based on neo-conservatism;

state centralism based on arbitrarily determined relations with municipal administration and self-management units

budget minimization combined with fiscal pressure based on the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, that weak representative of cultural interests;

**6.4.** The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia has to be made on 'the state level' as a development-oriented document by a consensus of parliamentary parties. Its long-term competitiveness should not be influenced by a change of the ruling political party or coalition, their interests, or, in other

words, violations of political principles. Every subsequent novelty or a possible change of priorities in the project contents should also be made in The Parliament through the principle of consensus.

**6.6.** The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia has to be made as a document which is, through its contents and aims, an argument for larger budgetary allocations for culture, and a well argued demand for a constant growth of the rate of these allocations 'in real terms'.

**6.6.** The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia implies, according to the viewpoint expressed in the report made by European experts, a Ministry of Culture the primary role of which is that of 'strategic advocate and researcher' of opportunities for the Croatian culture and the development of all its capacities.

**6.7.** The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia should be prepared along the lines of the civil initiative A thousand signatures from 1994, but with the aid of a systematic and staged cultural debate. At every stage it should involve more and more participants (individuals, representatives of cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations, exponents of important cultural projects, representatives of class associations and societies...) It would be finalized in a plenary discussion which would finally articulate The Cultural Policy Project of the Republic of Croatia 2000-2034, as a project forwarded by Croatian artists and cultural workers to the Croatian National Parliament for discussion and adoption.

**6.8.** The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia should be a common project of all those cultural workers and artists in Croatia who share the beliefs of their European colleagues, who hold that 'a new framework of cultural policies should be developed, the one that will explain the philosophy and principle of thinking in detail, providing the analysis it is based on and priorities of the cultural policies they will support'.

**6.9.** The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia has to be made, but not only to give culture in Croatia a possibility of 'an independent administrative activity' (H. Weber). An independent cultural policy is necessary, because any such a policy acts by constantly exporting 'freedom of expression' from every politics in power, which, on the other hand, never surrenders to that aim easily.

#### **II. AIMS OF THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA 2000-2034, AN OUTLINE**

- Freedom of expression
- A cultural state
- Autonomy of culture
- Culture in the centre of developmental interest
- Culture: area of learning, scholarship and art
- Contemporaneity of culture
- Cultural heritage
- Cultural legislation
- Law on cultural policies

- **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.** Systematic involvement of measures (organisational, economic, legal, fiscal) that enable its usage and expansion.

- **A CULTURAL STATE.** To assert the fact that Croatia is a historical and geographic 'crossroads of cultures', and that interculturality is an important characteristic of the Croatian cultural

identity and the basic feature of its internationalism.

- Territorial assertion of this fact counts on the special status of 'cities of culture', which should be given to great cultural-historical centres (Zadar, Varaždin, Dubrovnik, Hvar, Split, Tadar, Šibenik, Rijeka, Pula). It counts on cultural singularities of regions.

They have to determine their traditional cultural foci themselves (actors, manifestations, institutions, cities) which present those singularities, but also expand the cultural contents of the region. Municipal administration and local self-government bodies have to be systematically disengaged from mimetic (or) imitation of central 'cultural' models and bureaucratic transposition of 'solutions' into the region.

- Civil assertion of this fact counts on the institutions of civil society, that have to be considerably encouraged both legally and financially, because they greatly increase managing abilities of Croatian culture on its way 'from obstacles to bridges', from local narrow-mindedness to social openness, from administrative indifference to creative inventiveness.

- Political assertion of this fact counts on support for culture of minorities, especially the Serbian minority, as a part of Croatian cultural singularities whose identity was developed side by side with or directly opposed to - its parent culture.

- Legal assertion of this fact counts on such a change of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia which would, in a separate article, define Croatia as a cultural state.

- **AUTONOMY OF CULTURE.** To develop institutions and institutions of the democratization of culture with the aim of decentralizing areas, (based on the principle of the Republic of Croatia as a cultural state).

Decentralization has to be conducted on the state, institutional and geographic levels.

- On the state level that means considerable reduction of the role the state plays in the allocation of budgetary means in culture: a) by forming independent, democratically elected, fully professional bodies authorized not only to evaluate, but also to make decisions which are binding, primarily for the Ministry of Culture; b) through granting tax benefits to patrons and sponsors of culture, and through incentive measures for the creation of independent funds containing money obtained through sponsoring and patronage, but also from taxes on cultural industry incomes; c) budgetary involvement into cultural institutions of national importance, but with a full guarantee of their autonomy.

- On the institutional level that means transfer of competence and functions of state administrative bodies to territorial communities, and within these communities above all to independent legal persons (associations, companies, funds) that are closer to certain cultural contents or areas according to the manner and place of their operation. That would gradually put out 'secondary', subsidiary administrative bodies, or in other words, it would reduce their power.

- On the geographic level that means a new, 'more just' distribution of cultural infrastructure: regionally targeted restoration or construction of cinemas, theatres, centres of the new Net culture, libraries, galleries. 'Democratization of culture is a process the goals of which are optimal accessibility (obtained through the contemporary education system, modern role of scientific openness of media etc.) and maximum self-formation (egalitarian

focused on 'self-regulation, reduced administration, competitiveness without bureaucratic obstacles etc.) of the area of culture. Its premises are transparency of processes and documents connected with the decision-making (including participation of cultural institutions, class associations, non-governmental organisations and all forms of so-called 'artistic rapport' about problems), and personality as a basic principle of cultural responsibility (art projects are only objectification figures: financial, organizational, productive, creative personalities: 'teams' and individuals).

Autonomy of culture is a project which is expensive to every state. Although it respects economic power of a state as a community, it does especially demands constant changes within its political system, attacking it by its very aims that have been 'declared'.

#### **- CULTURE IN THE CENTRE OF DEVELOPMENTAL INTEREST**

To install culture as a power-generating system of society and its civilisation process. To put it in the position of a true initiator of economic development and growth. Cultural tourism, cultural industries, graphic and industrial design, construction and urban planning, applied arts etc have to come into the limelight of developmental interest of the Croatian state and society (see the report made by European experts).

#### **- CULTURE: AREA OF LEARNING, SCHOLARSHIP AND ART**

Creativity of modern science, contemporary education and artistic creativity are basic dynamic preconditions of the contemporaneity of the area of culture.

Disciplinary invention of science, inventive structure of education and completely open artistic imagination constantly shape culture, especially when society encourages and expands the network of their re-transmission and inter-detectors on the principle of cultural development of the country.

In accordance with the postulate stated in 1990 at a The Parliament session, that the main goal of Croatia is not economic growth, but cultural growth which encompasses art, science and education, it is necessary to bring cultures (scientific, educational and artistic) together in a functional manner. Merely a first step is that would be a far greater state support to the higher art education institutions, foundation of the new ones (for example, high schools of dancing, art-conservation, restoration (skills etc) and renovation of the existing institutions, a more efficient positioning of cultural research institutes, formation of contemporary systems of technical and professional support, new cultural management etc. The second step would concern the foundation of special 'relaying' institutions and making concepts of projects for so-called 'interweaving of knowledge': theoretical and practical, and vice versa, freed from the classical fiction about the primary role of one of them.

#### **- CONTEMPORANEITY OF CULTURE**

In the cultural life of a nation, contemporaneity has the key role. It is the most of all the issues of the so-called 'live culture' and the output of all its problems. Therefore those who work for it or on it have to be taken care of. That means: taking care about the development of the cultural industry (publishing, film, multimedia), but also mobility of 'small' cultural actions (traveling theatres and studios, projects of 'cultural gentrification', diffusion of cultural events, libraries and video stores 'on wheels' etc). Taking care about everything 'experimental', everything that represents alternative culture, but also about the development of the *Net-culture* as a markedly decentralised, intercultural and

transnational one. Taking care about the expansion of the network of 'culture plants' and their influence.

**- CULTURAL HERITAGE.** Contemporaneity is an abstraction that requires 'concrete' answers, and tradition - where it realistically exists - is a concreteness which seeks 'abstract' challenges.

Cultural heritage belongs to 'the overall cultural treasure' of a nation as the deepest concreteness of its cultural tradition. It has to be preserved, but its challenges have to be accepted.

Cultural heritage in Croatia today primarily has to be protected from 'imposed solutions', but also from 'ideological reductionism'. Old city centres have to be protected from 'external aggression' against cultural heritage. Conservation has to become part of urban planning, and landmarks require professional and public surveillance. A more efficient 'investment mechanism' has to be developed, and generations of experts, conservators and restorators, have to be raised. Today, however, the Croatian cultural heritage also represents a challenge against historicism, which is commonly used to interpret it, and it puts the authority of modern scientific and professional approach to the test. Such an approach can no longer be avoided. It should be encouraged, and it should require commitment.

**- CULTURAL LEGISLATURE.** Entire cultural legislature has to be arranged and constructed. It has to be adjusted with a large number of international agreements relating to culture which have been signed or accepted by the Republic of Croatia. The Law on Theatre has to be 'made anew', and other basic cultural laws (i.e. Law on Film, Law on Books) have to be added to the legislature as soon as possible.

Cultural legislature should be a legal expression of the cultural policy as one of public policies of the Republic of Croatia.

**- LAW ON CULTURAL POLICIES.** This law has to be made in order to regulate the entire cultural sphere, conditions of implementation of the determined cultural policy, relation between state and culture, and to define the role and authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia.

(Translated by Marijana Javornik)

**Vjeran Zuppa is a theoretician and - dean of Academy of Drama Art in Zagreb**

# festivals & venues

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# festivals

## Art & Music Festival

organised by: The Association for Development of Culture and Civil Society "Mali majst" [www.OMJ.org.hr](http://www.OMJ.org.hr)

52 350 Pula, Tkalina 12

contacts: Željko Herceg, phone: ++ 385 90 48 79 43

Diego Bosuaco, phone: ++ 385 52 21 79 27

e-mail: [am8583.com](mailto:am8583.com)

web: [www.OMJ.org.hr](http://www.OMJ.org.hr)

Art & Music Festival gathers Croatian and international rock musicians, critics, comic artists, theatre directors and actors. It is unique in the Croatian context in intertwining three media: music, film and theatre. The Festival offers presentations by young authors, invites their work, educates and awards them. Local and international critics and theoreticians and renowned artists and teachers are invited to this fest. Apart from the competition, the Festival offers theatre and comics workshops and a series of panel discussions on the subjects of rock music, theatre and comics.

## Art Workshop Lascetti

20 000 Opatovnik, Poljana 8

phone: ++ 385 20 423 497, fax: ++ 385 20 423 114

e-mail: [art-lascetti@duke.hr](mailto:art-lascetti@duke.hr)

artistic director: Slavica Taj

The Lascetti Workshop gathers Croatian and international theatre companies dealing in informal ways of expression, as well as multimedia artists and musicians. The last three editions concentrated on the social engagement of art. This year, particular attention has been devoted to the form of party, explored by various artists, mainly working in the so-called new media, the aim being to attract new generations and include them in the artistic processes. The idea is not to create yet another festival but to form an exploration site through workshops.

## Contemporary Dance Week

organised by: the Croatian Movement and Dance Institute

10 000 Zagreb, Binkinskeva 5

phone/fax: ++ 385 1 640 154

artistic director: Miro Žagar

Contemporary Dance Week has for seventeen years been offering a survey of contemporary international and local dance scene. The performances range from "dis(+)ed" dance to performance, including various productions by well and less well known international artists. Some of the artists featured in the last few editions are Random Dance Co., Enio Greco & P., The Sasha Popeljujev Kinetic Theatre, Russell Malpham Co., and Vera Marjano.

## Croatian Small Stage Festival

organised by: HRO Teatar and The Culture Office of the City of Rijeka, 51 000 Rijeka, Rorta 36/2

phone: ++ 385 51 20 99 40, fax: ++ 385 51 20 95 37

artistic director: Nenad Šegvič

An international festival focused on the companies working in the so-called small stage forms. In contrast to the dominant "theatre of directors" and huge spectacles, it offers the actor and its part in creating a production. The Festival selects performances on the basis of thematic priorities. The audience is actively involved, particularly in post-show discussions.

## Dance and Movement Festival

Svetvincent

phone: ++ 385 91 35 27 465

e-mail: [gdg@svetvincent.hr](mailto:gdg@svetvincent.hr)

artistic director: Stjepana Abramović

The Festival aims to be a gathering site of local and international dance artists, dancers and choreographers, as well as promoters and producers. The idea is to decentralise the Croatian dance scene through linking it with international events, involving international and interregional co-productions. Apart from the performances, featured also are dance and non-verbal theatre workshops.

## Dubrovnik Summer Festival

organised by: Dubrovnik Summer Festival

20 000 Opatovnik, Poljana Pasko Mičevića 1

phone: ++ 385 20 412 288, fax: ++ 385 20 427 944

e-mail: [director@dsf.festival.hr](mailto:director@dsf.festival.hr); [program@dsf.festival.hr](mailto:program@dsf.festival.hr)

manager: Stjepan Prospero Navaš

Festival of dramatic theatre, classical music and folklor. The theatre section is mostly based on festival-specific productions, but also includes performances by other Croatian theatres and international companies. The festival owes its popularity and character to the ambience of the palaces and towers of Renaissance Dubrovnik, as well as parks and gardens, where for over fifty years plays have been performed. One of the oldest festivals in the region.

## Gorežak, Festival of the New Theatre

10 000 Zagreb, Bogomilova 1/II

phone: ++ 385 1 48 47 656

phone/fax: ++ 385 1 48 54 424

e-mail: [eurak@com.hr](mailto:eurak@com.hr)

web: [www.gorezak.hr](http://www.gorezak.hr)

artistic director: Gordana Nivaš

Gorežak's basic feature is announced in its descriptive subtitle: Festival of the New Theatre. It brings to Zagreb artists and theatre companies whose work is characterised by new,



challenging views of the world. Eurazuc promotes innovative theatre language, explores the possibilities of stage expression, crossing the boundaries and opening theatre to the new technologies and media. Each edition of the festival focuses on a concept: Body, Iconoclastic Theatre, Innovations in National Theatre Practices, etc. Many a world famous "star" has performed on Eurazuc, some even before reaching global fame: Robert Wilson, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, La Fura Dela Baus, Forced Entertainment, Serjell Thomas, Annie Sprinkle, Jan Fabre etc. In the year 2001 Eurazuc celebrates its fifteenth anniversary.

### **FAK, Festival of Alternative Theatre Expression**

organised by: The Alternative Theatre Excess Front (FAK) - ATTAEX  
10000 Zagreb, Trnjanski nasip b.b.  
phone/fax: ++ 385 1 619 51 34  
e-mail: info@autonomous-excessfactory.hr  
artistic director: Oliver Sentić

FAK was initiated with the idea of promote Croatian and international independent theatre companies  
existing in direct, low budget, student or alternative theatre. The first three editions followed the rule "anything goes" (no selection) as a reaction to the social situation restricting those forms of expression. This year a system of selection has been introduced, still focusing on performances, happenings, direct actions, installations and the like. Also featured are workshops, panel discussions and video projections. Social and political engagement remains high on the agenda.

### **Golden Lion, International Theatre of Chamber Theatre**

organised by: The People's Open Education Centre  
52 470 Umag, Ispovaočka 6  
phone/fax: ++ 385 52 34 11 16  
artistic director: Goran Buzar Froy

This new initiative is based on the idea of the Triangle Art Fest, a Festival gathering performances from three countries whose borders intersect not far from the city of Umag (Italy, Slovenia and Croatia). The foundation lies in the trilingual and three-nation structure of Istria, even though it focuses on chamber theatre, Golden Lion offers variety and scope: from contemporary dance, performance and physical theatre, through mine to the classical forms.

### **Milk Teeth, International Festival of Professional Children's Theatres**

organised by: The Mala scena Theatre  
10 000 Zagreb, Medvedjska 2  
phone: ++ 385 1 468 33 52, fax: ++ 385 1 468 33 70  
e-mail: antej@croatallug.hr.hr  
web: www.ador.hr/milk-teeth  
artistic director: Ivica Šimic

A biannual event surveying the work of contemporary European and Croatian children's theatres. Each edition focuses on one European country (Denmark this year). The Festival also facilitates establishing contacts for international collaboration and touring.

### **MOIM, International Theatre Festival of the Young**

organised by: The Ignjat National Theatre  
52 000 Pula, Matka Laginja 5  
phone: ++ 385 52 21 26 77, Fax: ++ 385 52 21 43 03  
artistic director: Robert Rajnina

MOIM is the only workshop festival in Croatia. The project aims to include all segments of creating a theatre production through a series of workshops on various acting methods, dance, stage design, costume design and playwriting. Teachers and participants come from all over the globe and the results of their work is presented to the public. Each year, the festival realises a complete production, the opening night of which is the closing ceremony of the festival.

### **Music Biennale Zagreb**

10 000 Zagreb, Berislavčeva 9  
phone: ++ 385 1 4872 309  
fax: ++ 385 1 4872 302  
web: www.biennalezagreb.hr  
general manager: Ivo Josipović  
artistic director: Berislav Šepić  
contacts: Sanja Šošil, Producer, e-mail: sanja.sosil@tds.hr  
Zrinka Ljarein, Producer, e-mail: zrinka.ljarein@tds.hr

Music Biennale Zagreb 2001 - The main idea of the next issue of our festival is the imaginary voyage through the traditions and cultures of world music, but in the light of modern events. The programme of this Biennale is quite different from the Biennale '96, and from almost all other of its previous editions. It aims to connect different generations and different styles, tastes, ideas, which taken together create the music of the world today. Our vision of the programme of the MBZ 2001 is based on different projects which also include some important events in the field of theatre and the multimedia.

### **PI, International Puppet Theatre Festival**

organised by: International Centre for Culture 0835  
10 010 Zagreb, B. Magvessa bb  
phone: ++ 385 1 660 16 25, fax: ++ 385 1 660 16 19  
web: puppetarts.hr/pifestival  
manager: Ljilja Krstić

For over thirty years PI has been bringing to Zagreb interesting international and Croatian creations in puppet theatre. The Festival is pushing the boundaries of the conventional puppet theatre, presenting the work of far away, traditional non-Western cultures, as well as the innovative tendencies sometimes bordering on/merging with the visual arts and performance art. The intended audience are not only children but also grown ups. Featured also are workshops, lectures, seminars, panel discussions etc.

### **PDE International Theatre Festival**

organised by: Sencr amaterskih KUD-ova Pula  
52110 Pula, Srednjeca 52  
phone/fax: ++ 385 52 32 881  
artistic director: Branko Sotek

This festival gathers Croatian and international authors whose work is situated on the elusive line between professional and amateur theatre. The companies presented here have gone beyond amateurism but are still not acknowledged nor accepted by mainstream theatre professionals. The scope is wide: from plays to dance and performance. The awards are "potential": The Cloud, The Drop, etc.

### **Split Summer Festival**

organised by: the Croatian National Theatre Split  
21 000 Split, Poljana Tina Ujevića bb  
phone: ++ 385 21 58 59 99  
phone/fax: ++ 385 21 58 38 43  
manager: Miro Gotovac

The Festival includes drama, opera, ballet and concerts, as well as multimedia projects, modern theatre, and occasionally performance. The drama programme mostly deals with the Croatian scene and festival-specific productions, but also includes foreign companies. Alongside performances in closed theatres, open air events are also regularly featured, as well as stagings in less conventional spaces such as barracks and cages.

### **Šibenik International Children's Festival**

Organised by: the Šibenik Theatre House  
22 000 Šibenik, Kralja Zvonimira 1  
Phone: + 385 22 32 134  
Manager: Dragan Zafković

The international festival that has for over four decades been gathering various artists and performers from all over the world. It is one of the biggest events of its kind in this part of Europe. In its striving to educate children, to foster their aesthetic competence and widen their creative as well as social awareness, the Festival makes sure children actively participate in art - from being the audience to joining in various workshops. The Festival tries to answer the question of including the young in the trends of contemporary art.

### **Transat Festival**

Organised by: Labin Art Express

The basic concept of this festival is creating works of art on the spot. The idea is to have the artists come to the festival with but a vague notion of the project they would present, to the other artists, with the work coming about from further collaborations, the emphasis

is thus shifted from the finished product to the open creative and intellectual process of communication between the artists as well as with the local population. This year's explorations are entitled Fake Reality, and the aim is to show that artistic processes can influence the blurring of boundaries between reality and illusion. The next topic is Birth and it will consist of workshops, seminars, lectures, dance and theatre performances, installations and gastro-performances.

### **Urban Festival**

19 000 Zagreb, Arneldeva 5/1  
phone: ++ 385 91 53 24 507  
email: urban.festival@gmail.com  
or contact: Miroslav Jerković

The Urban Festival is a multimedia-project comprising street theatre, performances, art installations, and urban interventions by performing and visual artists. The project is based on the modern concept of art as a social component that tries to communicate actively with the urban population. The Festival will draw together many talented performance artists from different countries, who are trying to change the urban landscape and human behaviour patterns in it. During the Festival Week the city structure will acquire a new dimension - "a city upon a city." The Urban Festival project consists of Performing and visual art project presentations, Art Workshop, Discussions - theory and practice, and the Alternative city guidebook.

### **Zadar of Dreams, International Theatre of the New Theatre**

organised by: the Croatian Theatre House and Zadar Ars Nova  
23 000 Zadar, Šćepića ul. 8  
phone: ++ 385 23 31 45 86, fax: ++ 385 33 45 90  
e-mail: zadar-arsova@tiscali.net.hr  
artistic director: Kristijan Mikić

A festival of modern art, focusing on theatre, but including contemporary dance, performance, the multimedia and visual arts. Though most of the artists come from Croatia, the festival is international. Featured also are the workshops devoted to various topics from juggling to movement or the text.

# venues

## ZAGREB

### **Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Zagrebu)

(drama, opera, ballet)

10 000 Zagreb, Trg Marijane Tita 15

Phone: +385 1 4828 550

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 4828 530 Phone/Fax: +385 1 4828 531

Manager: Georgij Pars

### **Gavella Drama Theatre**

(Dramsko kazalište Gavella)

10 000 Zagreb, Frankopanska 6-8

Phone: +385 1 4899 222, +385 1 4848 548

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 4848 541

Manager: Kruno Dolenec

### **City Comedy Theatre**

(Zagrebačko gradsko kazalište Komedija)

10 000 Zagreb, Kapci 9

Phone: +385 1 4814 544, +385 1 4812 200

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 48121 79

E-mail: komedija@zag.hr

Manager: Niko Pavlovic

### **Karapinež Satirical Theatre**

(Satirsko kazalište Karapinež)

10 000 Zagreb, Ilica 31

Phone: +385 1 424 120

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 431 734, Fax: +385 1 424 509

Manager: Duško Ljutić

### **Art Theatre**

(Theatre-SDI)

10 000 Zagreb, Savska 25

Phone: +385 1 489 600, +385 1 4590 677

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 431 734, Fax: +385 1 4843 502

E-mail: darko.lukic@zag.hr

Manager: Darko Lukic

### **Zagreb Youth Theatre**

(Zagrebačko kazalište mladih)

10 000 Zagreb, Tešins 7

Phone: +385 1 480 1 955

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 4872 501, Fax: +385 1 4872 568

Manager: Davor Bortić

### **Zagreb Puppet Theatre**

(Zagrebačko kazalište lutaka)

10 000 Zagreb, Trg kralja Tomislava 19

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 434 430

Manager: Nikola Čubrić

### **Exit Theatre**

(Theatre-Exit)

10 000 Zagreb, Ilica 208

Phone: +385 1 4814 719

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 3707 626, +385 1 3704 120

E-mail: teater-exit@zag.hr

Manager: Marko Rogulj

### **Little Stage Theatre**

(Kazalište Mala scena)

10 000 Zagreb, Medinskih 2

Phone: +385 1 4643 352, Fax: +385 1 4643 370

E-mail: mala-scenazag.hr <http://www.mala-scena.hr>

Manager: Vitorina Lander

### **City Theatre Vrnjina**

(Gradsko kazalište Vrnjina)

10 000 Zagreb, Molčanika 1

Phone: +385 1 3638 010, Fax: +385 1 3638 380

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 329 230

E-mail: kazalište-ovrnjina@zag.hr

Manager: Vladimir Vrhovšek

### **City Theatre Čar Plova**

(Gradsko kazalište Čar plov)

10 000 Zagreb, Djurićka 97

Phone: +385 1 2338 961, Phone/Fax: +385 1 2338 953

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 2338 954

Manager: Tomislav Maronović

### **Puppet Stage I. B. Matković**

(Lutkarska scena I. B. Matković)

10 000 Zagreb, Vukova 109

Phone/Fax: +385 1 4640 953

Manager: Salka Gregurč

### **"Dvome"**

(MOCVARA)

Organisation for Development of Culture/ RUPP

10 000 Zagreb, Trpensk navedb (Cedevita Factory)

tel./fax (office): ++385 1 48 43 453

tel./house: ++385 1 61 59 667

e-mail: dvome@yahoo.com

## ČAKOVEC

### **Center for Culture Čakovec**

40 000 Čakovec, Trg Republike 1b

tel. ++385 40 311 488

fax. ++385 40 312 770

e-mail: center-za-kulturu@ck.hr

web: [www.cfk-čakovec.hr](http://www.cfk-čakovec.hr)

Theatre production manager: Romano Bogdan

## **DUBROVNIK**

### **Marin Držić Theatre**

(Kazalište Marina Držića)  
20 000 Dubrovnik, Pred dvoranom 3  
Phone: +385 20 426 438, +385 20 426 437  
Phone/Fax: +385 20 413 434  
Manager: Martin Goričić

## **LABIN**

### **Centre for Cultural Lamparna**

Osloveni centar Lamparna  
Rutarska 1, 52220 Labin  
Phone/Fax: +385 52 867 842

## **OSIJEK**

### **Croatian National Theatre in Osijek**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Osijeku)  
(drama, opera)  
31 000 Osijek, Županijska 9  
Phone: +385 31 220 700, Phone/Fax: +385 31 220 734  
Publicity, Phone: +385 31 220 768  
Manager: Jolita Čagalj

### **Osijek Children's Theatre**

(Dječje kazalište u Osijeku)  
31 000 Osijek, Trg bana Jelencića 19  
Phone: +385 31 901 485, Fax: +385 31 901 488  
Manager: Jasminka Mesić

## **PULA**

### **Istrian National Theatre**

(Istarsko narodno kazalište)  
52 000 Pula, mrtva Laguna 5  
Publicity, Phone: +385 52 216 796, Fax: +385 52 214 303  
E-mail: pulakazali.hr  
Manager: Robert Raposja

## **RIEKA**

### **Ivana pl. Zajc Croatian National Theatre**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Ivana pl. Zajc)  
(drama, opera, ballet, Italian drama)  
51 000 Rijeka, Ujarska 1  
Phone: +385 51 337 888, Fax: +385 51 337 600  
Publicity, Phone: +385 51 337 680  
Manager: Srećko Senčan

### **(Rijeka City Puppet Theatre**

(Gradsko kazalište lutaka Rijeka)  
51 000 Rijeka, Blaža Poljaka 8  
Phone/Fax: +385 51 212 090, +385 51 211 381  
Manager: Ljiljana Galić

## **SPLIT**

### **Split Croatian National Theatre**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Split)  
(drama, opera, ballet)  
21 000 Split, Poljana Tima Ujarske bb  
Phone: +385 21 585 999, Fax: +385 21 583 643  
Publicity, Phone: +385 21 585 957  
E-mail: hnk-split.hr  
Manager: Mari Goričić

### **Split City Youth Theatre**

(Gradsko kazalište mladih Split)  
21 000 Split, Dorćad 73  
Phone/Fax: +385 21 356 547  
Manager: Ljiljana Štrbo

### **Split City Puppet Theatre**

(Gradsko kazalište lutaka Split)  
21 000 Split, Karmila Tomića 1  
Phone: +385 21 46 099, Phone/Fax: +385 21 356 925  
Manager: Ratko Glavin

## **VARAŽDIN**

### **Croatian National Theatre in Varaždin**

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Varaždinu)  
(drama, opera)  
42 000 Varaždin, Osimarska 1  
Phone: +385 42 214 688  
Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 42 211 218  
Manager: Mirjana Varjačić

## **VIROVITICA**

### **Virovitica Theatre**

(Kazalište Virovitica)  
33 000 Virovitica, Trg Ljudevita Pata 1a 2  
Phone/Fax: +385 33 721 330  
Manager: Miro Hrgov

## **ZADAR**

### **Croatian Theatre House Zadar**

(Hrvatsko kazalište kuća Zadar)  
23 000 Zadar, Široka ulica 8  
Phone: +385 23 314 586, +385 23 314 552  
Fax: +385 23 314 590  
E-mail: hnk-zadar.hr  
Manager: Jadranka Šnajgarić

### **Zadar Puppet Theatre**

(Kazalište lutaka Zadar)  
23 000 Zadar, Sokolovska 1  
Phone: +385 23 430 158, Phone/Fax: +385 23 311 122  
Manager: Davor Granić



**action**  
**frakcija**



## ZAGREB DANCE COMPANY

### Cow Licario Sacred Oppiano

**Author and director:** Alexey Toran

**Choreographers and dancers:** Nikolina Bajac, Prædon Devlahović, Aleksandra Janosa, Jelena Vukmirica

This dance performance emerged from the co-operation of Alexey Toran, a Cuban-Venezuelan choreographer and four dancers of the Zagreb Dance Company. In the process of creation the dancers cease to be only performers – they freely express their individuality, their emotional and physical experiences. Thus they become choreographers, that is co-authors. Although it is based on fictional characters that came from the narrative structures of two novels, the very performance, due to its brilliant ecstatic movements that transcend the borders of the physical and its strong emotions, becomes the expression of the performer's personality.

"The performers hang on the strings of death that hold the movement of bulging muscles while streaming through the air with homosexual movements of a pronounced pubic that is robbed-out under a non-existent light. There is no spoken voice, only a trembling movement of the intestinal wheel that connects them with its passivity." (Alexey Toran)

## &TD THEATRE

### Slowing-down & Uncertain Story

**Director:** Bobo Jerić

**Screenwriting and text:** Nataša Rajković

**With:** Asa Karić, Katarina Bistrićević-Darval, Nataša Dangubić, Dražen Šivak and Tinko Jurč

**Slowing-down:** This is not a performance, but an excerpt from the work on a performance. It is therefore not something finished and defined. It is in the phase of emerging. It deals with the daily life of an average, middle-class family – a staged hour of their afternoon time. But "in order to show an authentic hour in a family, every face has to be burdened with all the previous hours. Faces turn into people being filled with information about their characters, interests and memories." (Bobo Jerić)

**Uncertain Story:** The actors keep their own names and build characters similar to themselves. The characters are composed of their own, real and imaginary, life stories. Thus they reveal attitudes and emotions that belong not only to the characters but also to themselves. Performers share the stage with the audience in such a way that the viewer becomes a part of seemingly simple, everyday conversations. "Apart from the fact that the story of each character is different in content, the way they are determines the style and the way they feel determines the genre." (Nataša Rajković)

## STUDIO MARE

### Cartography

17

**Choreographer:** Mare Sesardić

**Performers:** Petra Senjanović, Zrinka Lukšec, Zoran Vukelj, Marko Matković

This is a dance performance inspired by the mythologies of Borges' story "Of Rigour in Science." In that Empire, the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that a map of a single Province occupied a whole City... Apart from impressive forms of dance and movement it also includes video (simultaneous screening of the performance), a juggler's play with knives, a strong visual-arts element in an interesting stage design made of stone and the word directly linked to the movement: "Walk upright, do not lower your head and do not turn it towards the sky, looking nervously around yourself. Do not put wrinkles on your forehead and do not knit your eyebrows. Make sure your gaze is not roaming aimlessly..."



## NATIONAL THEATRE BITOLA, MACEDONIA

### Migrant Workers

18

**Director:** Branko Brezovec

**Choreographer:** Jugosla Staneva

Migrant Workers is a work of the Macedonian dramatist Asen Parov and it is the masterpiece of the so-called "bitova drama," a genre that dominated the drama of the southern Slavs from the mid 19th until the mid 20th century. In a spectacularly melodramatic way, this piece connects the social problems (the poor Macedonian peasants looking for work in the developed countries - Serbia being the promised land here), the breakdown of traditional moral values and the curse and politics of national pride. The director of the performance, the Croatian artist Branko Brezovec, toured Europe with his multicultural spectacles. With this performance, created in co-operation with the exceptional energy and mystical skills of the actors and the young composer Marjan Nekak, and in a mode unusual for him - using distant, ironical parallels and deep insights into the archaic emotionality - he developed a performance of stunning classic modernity.





**BAO co. & TEATAR ITS**

## Man.Chair

2

**Director/choreographer:** Goran Sergej Prišić

**Dramaturg:** Ivana Sajko

**Music:** Helge Hinteregger

**Performers:** Nikola Bujas, Pravičan Davidović, Damir Bartol Indol

Man.Chair is musically structured dance-impro performance, which avoids any thematic fulfilment. There are, rather, some parameters of rudimentary relations between body and object, such as: resemblance between physical characteristics of object and body, mental investment of energy and emotions in object, objectifications of body, tension between "technical" and "natural" bodies, relations between order of objects and order of bodies.



**LIBERDANCE STUDIO**

3

## The Sun Stopped Gazing at Miracle

**Choreographer:** Rajko Pavlić

**Dramaturg:** Željka Turčinović

**Dancers:** Erzulja Nikolić, Dina Bakija, Alen Gotić, Ana Jurit, Larisa Lipovac, Ljovorka Puik, Valentina Kubiš

The leading motif of the performance is the symbiosis between the Croatian folk tradition and the contemporary dance movement. The choreography uses the elements of folklore rhythm and step and it stylises and reshapes them into an individual dance expression. "The performance focuses on a human being who seeks, touches, meets and passes by another human being. They find togetherness in movement, rhythm and a traditional dance that is a symbol of collective consciousness. It discovers traces of gods and they become his primeval need for being, socialising and belonging. The individual crystallises from the collective. It longs for love, but for an iconic perspective on itself as well." (Željka Turčinović)



**BB INDOŠ**

4

**HOUSE OF EXTREME MUSIC THEATRE**

## Rough ride or of the spirit

**Performing:** Damir Bartol Indol, Dubravka Šikić

**Soundtrack & live music:** Helge Hinteregger

**Video animation:** Nicole Hewitt

**Special guest:** Damir Prica Karka (saxophone)

"The performance is based on my experience of riding a bicycle in the city, surrounded by hostile cars and threatening trams. The bike-man burns his own energy, filling the salutory space of emptiness between the frenetic metal car bodies, striving to always be a missed target..." (D.B. Indol)



## EXIT THEATRE

50%

**Concept and direction:** Nataša Lušetić

**Video:** Nicky Hewitt / Vjeran Posilait

**Performers:** Nerina Iva Gartin, Sonja Hrenar, Tirkio Jerić,  
Edvin Livenić and Daria Lorenzi

50% is a performing score for four actors, four video monitors and an overhead projector. It aims at being a performance. It deals in everything that is unnecessary. It is the aesthetic of disposable things, the content of the casual, the general banality of the ineluctably-complexive and the intimacy of the plastic. It collects the pieces of fragmented pictures that can be compared with a number of adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions in the grammar of a language. Or, without, by, with, beside, past, and under reflect certain feelings for the state of things, for reality and the "now-and-then-ness."



## HNK THE CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE OSIJEK

### Alaska Jack

**Dramaturgy and direction:** Saša Anđelić

**Stage design and video:** Saša Dolan

**Wife:** Saša Anđelić, Hrvoja Barišić, Aneta Čurković,  
Tatjana Bertok, Lidija Florjan, Vjekoslav Janković and  
others.

"The main thing in the performance is the actor's sweat, that is the thing he is ready to put in front of himself. Alaska Jack is an expression of a generation of young actors." (Saša Anđelić)

"The technology of this story is constructed from a number of protagonists and events that seemingly independently of each other are being born, endure, give up, diminish and are reincarnated. Genre and location could perhaps be of those of a funeral feast. However, it is better to choose at random among other expelling rituals: weddings, graduation balls, or simply a wild party... In order to enjoy Alaska Jack the most important thing is to have frozen frames of history. A stockpile of stories, myths and relationships recorded long ago... First the film displays of the last war and then the brainwashing labs in Croatia created the Alaska generation at the end of the century. This is the generation of those who have ousted the recent time into the subconscious and armed themselves with feelings."



## CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN SPLIT

Croatian National theatre in Split is one of the most innovative companies in Croatia. It's known by it's international collaboration and many guest performances and successes at international festivals. Their projects include collaborations with J.F. Peyroni, R. Cernosek, P. Magrell, L. Boljan etc.

Program:

### Bernard Marie-Koltès: Povratak u pustinju/ Returning to desert

**Director:** Ivica Boljan

### Marlene Dietrich

**Director:** Ivan Leo Lerić

### Performance Petar Grimić

## VIDEO PRESENTATIONS



### JASNA FRANKIĆ - BRKLIJAČIĆ Fužtan 1.

**Author/choreographer:** Jasna Frankić Brklijačić

**Video:** Vladimir Petek, Jasna Frankić Brklijačić

**Performers:** Zadar Dance Company, KUJ Petek - IFM "Konica"

Fužtan is a dance project built on the potentials of the specific location: island Ugljen. Project connects mediums of theatre, ambient, installation and gallery. The aim of the project is to make an artistic transfer between generations. Music of the Brazilian Indians is merging with the traditional ethno music of the women from island Ugljen.

Duration: 40 min

## LINKIT!

### Ček-ing) Dance

**Authors:** Iva Nerina Gatin, Katja Šimunić, Ljiljana Zagorac

**Performers:** Sandra Banić, Mla Čuljak, Iva Nerina Gatin, Zrinka Lukčić - Kiko, Barbara Matijević, Žak B. Valenta, Ljiljana Zagorac

**Video authors:** Srećko Kranjc i Lala Rakić

**Music:** Davor Rocco

Ček-ing) Dance is built on a series of dance intervention done at the Big Torino Festival, Big Bang festival in Moscow, and at the airport in Zagreb. Event isn't link to a definite duration time, the performance starts in the moment when performers are entering the space of airport.

LINKIT! dance project is a group of professional dance artist who gathered in 1997, to investigate unusual approaches to creating and performing dance. Their projects are taking place on various sites and locations, bringing together artist from different backgrounds, allowing individual differences to create new move.

Duration: 32 min

## SHOW CASE PRESENTATIONS

### JASNA FRANKIĆ - BRKLIJAČIĆ Ping-Pong

**Choreo-director:** Jasna Frankić - Brklijačić

**Assistant:** Darko Brklijačić

**Assistant-writer:** Silva Šesto

**Performers:** Mira Bosanac, Vanja Čirić Lameri, Dražen Čuček, Aleksandar Anđić

The theme of the performance is affirmation and negation of communication. The structure of the performance is built on the method of choreo-dramaturgy. Sound structure is made from the document of the Dragutin Šurbek's ping-pong match from the world championship in Tokyo.

### BAD co. & ZAGREB DANCE ENSEMBLE MM

**Its also/Ons of the eye**

**Choreography:** Nikola Bujas

**Performers:** Jelena Vukmirica, Nikola Bujas

**Its ill tri/sle /Its or three/sles**

**Choreography:** Pravedan Devetaković

**Performers:** Nikola Bujas, Pravedan Devetaković, Aleksandra Janekić

MM project is a made from three choreography pieces: first choreographed by Nikola Bujas, second choreographed by Pravedan Devetaković and third done by Aleksandra Janekić. High quality dancers are researching their private dance systems: relations between space and movement, body and time, possibilities of the physically limited body (blindness), and the adjustment of body to external elements such as costumes.

## HYSTERIA NOVA

### O-Ratio Corporis

**Choreographer:** Marija Ščekić

Marija Ščekić recently finished her dance studies in Canada and established the new company in Croatia. Her choreography is an experimental work in progress focusing on interpretation through structured improvisation and exploration of the dynamics of movement.



